

Warring Memories: Japan's Battle Between Remembering and Forgetting

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Abstract

In 1945, Japan was bombed into submission by the dropping of two atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This ended a period in Japan's history notorious for aggression, atrocities, and the victimisation of East Asian and captive peoples. For seven decades, the country has navigated through the memories of a traumatic past. This has created a variety of collective memories which have been shaped and reshaped through places, symbols, museums, public debate, and politics. This study investigates the collective memories portrayed at Yasukuni Shrine and the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park, with attention given to the associated Yūshūkan, and Peace Memorial museums. The two sites present markedly different narratives of the war and show evidence of historical revisionism by the altering of content in order to align with their respective objectives. This has produced significant collective forgetting of the unsavoury aspects to Japan's past, while creating an identity which is closely linked to the notion of nonviolence. Analysis of public debate surrounding Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's visit to Yasukuni in 2013, and President Barack Obama's visit to Hiroshima in 2016, showed that the collective memories represented at each site, while contested, are largely effective in producing a sense of national identity among Japanese people. The two sites thus function in tandem, despite contrasting displays of the war, in their forgetting and eliciting of sympathy and gratitude to the sacrifices of the war dead. While contestation of collective memory remains, the two versions analysed in this study show that they are both significant to the production of pride in being Japanese, and in shaping Japan's internal and external identity.

Keywords: collective forgetting, collective memory, historical revisionism, Japan, national identity, museums, public debate, Yasukuni and Hiroshima, Yūshūkan

For my Grandfather,
Kevin Partick Coll (1922-1995),
That I have done justice to your memory of Japan in 1945.



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List of Abbreviations and Terms

Abbreviations:

LDP	Liberal Democratic Party (of Japan)
NZD	New Zealand Dollar
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research

Japanese Terms:

<i>Eirei</i>	Spirits of War Dead
<i>Genbaku</i>	Atomic Bomb
<i>Hibakusha</i>	Atomic Bomb Survivors
<i>Izokukai</i>	Association of War-Bereaved Families
<i>Nihon Hidankyo</i>	Japan Confederation of A- and H-Bomb Sufferers Organisations
<i>Nippon Kaigi</i>	Japan Conference

Chapter 1: Theoretical Framework

“Neither the life of an individual nor the history of a society can be understood without understanding both.” – C. Wright Mills

1.1 Introduction

Aims and Methodology

Japan’s relationship with its wartime past has been one of contentious debate within the country and overseas for many years. The defeat of the Japanese in 1945 and its associated shame has led to the development of a number of collective war memories. This study analyses the collective memories expressed through two sites of war memorial in Japan; the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park and Tokyo’s Yasukuni Shrine. The former has become an internationally recognized symbol for the preservation of peace and elimination of conflict, while the latter remains a contentious national symbol to the valour and grandeur of Japan’s imperial past. The museums associated with these two sites offer two differing narratives of the Asia-Pacific War. What is represented and what is absent in each site affects and shapes collective memory among the Japanese population. This in turn contributes to a sense of national identity.

With moves in recent years by the Japanese government to reinterpret the country’s pacifist constitution, Japan’s post-war national identity is being challenged (Basu, 2016). By investigating the different historical narratives portrayed at each site using collective memory theory, this study aims to shed light on how the nation’s collective memory shapes a sense of national belonging; looking specifically at symbols within each site, the content of their respective museums, visitor comments, and public debate around visits by politicians. In-depth analysis of the complexity of Japan’s

collective war memory is shown to be lacking, thus more work in this significant field of research will contribute to a better understanding of Japan's identity politics. This study will use both qualitative and quantitative methodologies to collate data for analysis. The author's Japanese language ability has enabled translations of selected Japanese materials and the employment of Japanese sources to produce an objective data set for this paper.

Limitations

Due to the parameters of this project and the geographical location of the author outside of Japan, case studies of only two sites of collective memory have been conducted. This has allowed for a more in-depth analysis of each site than could be afforded if multiple sites were to be investigated. The choice of locations was made due to the politicised nature of them in Japanese society.

The study of collective memory relates to the subjectivity of the individual and/or group thus variables such as background, age, education, and family all influence how memories of the past will be viewed. Consequently, the study of interpreting collective memory will invariably produce results of an abstract nature. With this in mind, this thesis aims to dispel certain common perceptions of the two chosen sites in order to uncover the contested nature of the collective memories which they represent. It is noteworthy to mention, therefore, that consideration be given to the notional nature of data and results from these two case studies.

Purpose

There is a common belief in Western scholarship that the Japanese population suffers from 'collective amnesia' with regard to its wartime past (Stone & Hirst, 2014). This belief is affirmed by the supposed refusal of the Japanese government to fully acknowledge and apologise for the atrocities committed by their military during the

Asia-Pacific War. There are claims of Japan whitewashing and revising its wartime history and omitting certain events from history textbooks and museums (Higurashi, 2013). Its wartime ally Germany, having reconciled with its past and acknowledging the atrocities committed, is often cited as an example for Japan to follow. In Germany, there is a widely accepted version of the war among the population which has created a common 'collective memory' of it. This is not the case for the Japanese population despite common Western analyses assuming so (Hashimoto, 2015). In fact, rather than one collective memory there is a multiplicity of collective *memories* which are represented in spatial frameworks. Comprehensive analysis of this topic is thus needed to ascertain more understanding of Japan's contemporary domestic, international and political affairs.

The Sites

Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo has come to signify a celebration of Japan's Imperial past. This is supported by the associated Yūshūkan museum which presents a revised version of the Asia-Pacific war. For over 150 years, Yasukuni has served as a place to enshrine the souls of those who have died fighting for Japan (Takenaka, 2015). Since the enshrinement of fourteen Class A war criminals in 1978, it has been visited by a number of Japanese Prime Ministers, most recently by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2013 (Ravitch, 2014). These visits have created heated debate within Japan and have sparked harsh criticism from its East Asian neighbours (Lee, 2018). The privately-run shrine and museum have thus become highly politicized. The Yūshūkan museum displays Japan's nationalists' war memory and shapes a more positive view of the Asia-Pacific war in collective memory. There is also little to no reference of Japan's victimisation during the War. The displays present Japanese expansionism into Asia as a liberation of Asian peoples from Western Imperialism despite evidence of widespread subservience experienced by many occupied populations. The Japanese regimes installed in these occupied territories were often more brutal and severe than those of the previous European colonial administrations (Driscoll, 2010).

Conversely, the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park promulgates the memory of Japan as the victim of the world's first and only atomic bomb attacks to date. It promotes peace by showing unreservedly the morbid effects nuclear weapons can inflict on populations. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) World Heritage site of the *Genbaku* (atomic bomb) Dome now sits as a permanent physicalisation of the victims' memories (Smala, 2003). Internationally, the site has become a symbol for the preservation of peace in global collective memory. The park is also the site for national commemorations on specific occasions such as August 6, the anniversary of the dropping of the first atomic bomb. These ceremonies are attended by Japanese Prime Ministers, politicians, *hibakusha* (atomic bomb survivors), citizens, as well as foreign dignitaries. In May 2016, Barack Obama became the first sitting American President to officially visit Hiroshima. He gave a speech at the Flame of Peace in the centre of the park in which his remarks reflected the collective memory of Hiroshima.

The associated Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum has the aim to: "Spread the spirit of Hiroshima to entreat the realization of the total abolition of nuclear weapons and an eternal world peace" (Yamane, 2017). It houses detailed exhibits on the story of the bombing of Hiroshima through photographs, artefacts and belongings of *hibakusha* and espouses a sense of national victimhood. There is, however, little to no reference of Japan's actions during the Asia-Pacific war which proceeded the dropping of the atomic bombs.

The significance of the museums associated with both the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park and Yasukuni Shrine is consequential. As institutions, the two museums are able to tell a narrative to the visitor. This narrative is a detailed portrayal of all that the sites represent. In the case of Yasukuni, this can be representations of sacrifice, bravery, honour, and national pride. In Hiroshima, representations of hardship, suffering, destruction, loss, and victimhood are often seen. These themes, however, are not mutually exclusive and can be seen existing within both sites.

Rationale

While differing significantly in their theme and purpose, the two sites in this study are also complementary in their ‘forgetting’ of historical aspects of aggression and victimisation which portray Japan in an unsavoury light (Lee, 2018). Since the late 1980s, alterations have taken place in both museums with much of the content also being displayed online (Lee, 2018). The updated and altered content demonstrates the fluidity of the narratives being represented at the two museums. This has coincided with Japanese Prime Ministers’ visits to Yasukuni Shrine, Barack Obama’s visit to the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park in 2016, a rise in Japanese nationalism, an increasingly defensive foreign policy by the Abe administration, and a rise in support for amending Article 9; the pacifist clause of the Japanese Constitution (Richter, 2016).

By analysing museum content, statues and memorials, visitor comments and public reaction to the political leaders’ visits to the sites, this study aims to produce a better understanding of the effect that collective memory has on Japanese national identity and politics.

1.2 Research Themes

Collective Memory

Collective memory is significant to understanding the role the past plays in societies. This in turn has an effect on a given country’s international relations. The father of collective memory theory, Maurice Halbwachs, argued that: “Memories are constantly reshaped and reconstructed by the pressure of the present” (Halbwachs & Coser, 1992, p. 52). As a collective, societies also possess the ability to decide what is remembered and what is forgotten in order to produce a coherent national identity (Forsberg, 2003). Langenbacher (2010, p. 22) further espouses this thesis by stating that remembering the past provides meaning for: “...what people stand for, thereby generating emotional bonds, solidarity, and trust.”. This produces a sense of national

identity which can be evoked through displays of history. No other place is this more evident than in a nation's museums, particularly those dedicated to displays of war memory (Lee, 2018).

Museums

Museums organise their displays in a way which creates meaning and evokes emotion (Lee, 2018). They are able to humanise the dead by displaying photographs, material objects, and first-hand accounts. This enables the visitor to adopt a certain: "point from which to view" the war (Edkins, 2003, p. 158). It is an emotional and educational experience which elicits viewing the war dead as 'living' (Edkins, 2003). Contemporary people are therefore connected to the war dead by the emotion elicited from the displays presented at museums (Ray, 2006). Museums dedicated to war history are thus sites where the living and the dead can exist together in an 'imagined community' enabling the site to foster a sense of nationhood within the visitor (Anderson & O'Gorman, 2016). This sense of national identity is transferred through the generations by the preservation of the museums and monuments which elicit those feelings (Bartelson, 2006). Subsequent generations then revise and update museum contents depending on their contemporary perspective therefore shaping and reshaping the collective memory it possesses (Halbwachs & Coser, 1992).

The Past and its Reconstruction

The recollection of the past is fundamentally a socially constructed activity. When an individual thinks about the past, the images which come to mind are reshaped by their current concerns, needs, and perspectives within a group or society. Halbwachs and Coser (1992, p. 46) states that: "in reality the past does not recur as such [...] everything seems to indicate that the past is not preserved but is reconstructed on the basis of the present.". This process is a mutual reconstruction between the individual and the group of which he or she is a member. The memories are thus drawn from the

individual's perspective in being a part of the group which creates an amalgamation of the individual and the group memory (Corning & Schuman, 2015). This may also allow the individual to draw on memories and recollections of other members, or of key events and experiences which have become part of the oral or written history of the group (Corning & Schuman, 2015). The memories shared by individuals in a group form a collective memory which serves to maintain and preserve the existence of that group. In collective memory theory, a group can range from two individuals to a nation or a wider grouping of people (Halbwachs & Coser, 1992). The theory was taken further by one of Halbwachs' major successors, Barry Schwartz. He surmised that:

Collective memory refers to the distribution throughout society of what individuals believe, feel, and know about the past. [...] individuals do not know the past singly; they know it with and against other individuals situated in different groups and through the knowledge and symbols that predecessors and contemporaries transmit to them. (Schwartz, 1991, p. 303)

Through this, the process of recollection becomes vital in affirming the past and present character and identity of the group. This shows that an individual's memory cannot be completely disassociated from, or devoid of, that of the group. Collective memory is therefore a collection of individual memories which are interdependent and continuously fluid. Schwartz furthers Halbwachs' theory by arguing that:

[...] our understandings of the past are projections of our own social experience. Defined as "reflections" or "reproductions" of present concerns, these understandings are assumed distorted and beyond the rememberer's control. The past, then, is never autonomous and consequential. (Schwartz, 1991, p. 302)

How the past is presented and represented at designated sites of memory, therefore, offers insight into the complexity of the collective memory of a group, society, and a nation. Analysis of these sites also indicates how contemporary circumstances shape

and reshape the representations of history within them and exposes the contested nature of a given country's collective memory (O'Neill, 1999).

Public Memory

Collective memory is represented to individuals and groups through various mediums such as statues, memorials and museums. Lee (2018, p. 11) states that: "In sites of memory, past events are embodied through narratives and physical artefacts."

Symbols are a way of eliciting and solidifying a certain collective memory from the viewer (Schwartz, 1991). Statues and memorials, in particular, provide an insight into how people at the time of their construction perceived and remembered events of national significance. The representations and symbols produced by a society closely link to both historical and current values and beliefs (Schwartz, 1991). Furthermore, the individual becomes vital to the creation and continuation of these collective memories which subsist through the physical symbols. As the number of direct witnesses to an historical event decreases over time, the dedicated sites to that event serve as windows of interpretation into the everchanging collective memory of the society (Forsberg, 2003).

Through analysis of what is presented at, and what is absent from these sites as well as amendments to them and their content, a greater understanding of national collective memory can be ascertained. What is memorialised, commemorated or omitted from these places is often the decision of national and local governments, private and public institutions, and local communities. Each of these groups draw on their individual members' memories to present a history which is in keeping with the collective memory of the group (Halbwachs & Coser, 1992). Analysis of these particular historical narratives exposes the complexities of collective memories which can exist within a society.

Memorial

The collective memory held by a family for the loss of a loved one in war is part of the larger collective memory of society which is commemorated and shared through memorials. This familial memory is essentially a collection of *memories* from numerous families in society who have had similar but different experiences of the death of a family member (Ray, 2006). The gathering of these memories into a specific site creates a place representative of the collective memory of the wider family of the nation. By eliciting the family in displays, viewers are able to easily relate to the suffering experienced by their compatriots during wartime (Edkins, 2003).

Since the 1980s, there has been a worldwide increase in the construction of memorials and museums dedicated to peace and war, particularly in Japan which now houses one third of all peace museums globally (den Dungen, 2006). These sites serve different purposes depending on the collective memory which they represent. Art historian Arthur Danto (1985, p. 153) made a distinction between memorials and monuments stating that: “memorials are cathartic, healing sites which embrace remembrance, while monuments are triumphalist and represent a celebration of victory.” The memorials are, thus, places where the harrowing deaths of individuals are represented as heroic sacrifices deserving of national celebration (Edkins, 2003). A collective memory of the nation is channelled and expressed through these memorials. Monuments, however, are displays of success and triumph. In defeated countries, such as Japan, many monuments serve to remind people of the horrors of war in order to preserve peace.

Death

The father of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud, surmised that as part of the mourning process there is a natural progression of emotions (Freud, 1957). A transformation from negative emotions of a loved one’s tragic death to positive emotions is experienced by a grieving individual. When applied to national mourning in the case of war, the nation experiences trauma due to the premature deaths of large numbers of its people

(Hashimoto, 2015). This manifests into a memory of externalised violence. A war memorial is a place where this loss and grief can be overcome. Through them, the death is preserved, and the memory is physicalised. They serve to positively memorialise the tragic deaths suffered by the nation. The war dead thus become 'possessions of the nation' and live on through its collective memory (Mayo, 1988). Emotional reconciliation is achieved by placing these memories in a permanent setting in which they can also become part of a social context (Hashimoto, 2015). The site of memorial therefore enables a society to reconcile the trauma of war death by memorialising the sacrifices of its people. A resulting sense of national pride and identity is thus affected.

As war dead are 'possessions of the nation', the construction of memorials is often decided by national or local governmental bodies without much public consultation. This can lead to dissatisfaction among some war-bereaved families, however, as the memorialisation of their loved ones is conducted and implemented outside of their control (Anderson & O'Gorman, 1998). In Japan, disapproval has been expressed by some families who have had their loved ones enshrined at Yasukuni. To date, the site has enshrined nearly two and a half million war dead without any consent from the families of the deceased (Lee, 2018). This exposes some of the contestation around the collective memory which a nation produces.

Forgetting

The majority of studies on collective war memories have been conducted in reference to victorious countries (Hashimoto, 2015). The portrayal of war memories, however, is expressed differently in countries which have been defeated. Forgetting is also a significant factor to the development of collective memories of defeated countries, particularly in those which have committed atrocities (Forty & Küchler, 1999). A society's strength as a collective lies in its shared pride and sacrifice in war (Stone & Hirst, 2014). When negative aspects of the country's past actions are memorialised, a collective memory of shame and humiliation is created. This can often be a cathartic

process, as well as a show of contrition to the international community (Hashimoto, 2015). A process of forgetting is often simultaneously experienced, however, through voluntary omission of historical bellicosity by the defeated country. This can result in tense relations with countries who were subjected to the violence and aggression. The victim country thus becomes acrimonious toward its former aggressor due to the perceived lack of remembrance for committed atrocities (Forty & Küchler, 1999). This process of forgetting can lead to the revision of historical narratives presented at war memorials and museums. Individuals in the defeated country often inadvertently accept this revised history and in some cases are taught it in schools. These revised histories frequently downplay or omit atrocities committed by the defeated country and instead celebrate and memorialise the sacrifice of the lives lost in the war (Inuzuka, 2013). The defeat, then, can lead to a sense of post-war victimhood for the subservience and occupation experienced at the behest of the victor states. This sense of victimhood has been an integral part in the development of Japan's collective memory.

In equitably analysing the collective memory of a nation, consideration must be given to the collective forgetting which societies produce. On an individual level, the ability to forget is needed to have a healthy and normal life (Stone & Hirst, 2014). On a societal level, forgetting, to various degrees, is necessary to maintain a sense of unity and identity (Gordon, 2015). This is particularly common when there are historical aspects which reflect badly on the society's reputation and image, and in certain cases legitimacy. This process, however, differs for each country and can manifest in different ways.

Collective Memories of Defeat

In the case of Japan and Germany, two defeated Axis powers of World War Two, interesting figures demonstrate a marked level of forgetting among the population. Schuman and Corning (2012) conducted a survey in both countries with the majority of questions relating to the respondent's memory and/or impression of the war experienced in their country. The results of the 1991 survey from both countries

showed that there was a large absence of answers referring to themes which were expected to have been prevalent.

In the German results of the survey there was an assumption that the populace would feel guilt and shame for the persecution of the Jews during World War Two. The results showed, however, that only seven out of 728 participants mentioned Jews at any point in their responses, with all seven being individuals who were born after the War (Schuman & Corning, 2012). The responses from individuals who lived through the war period referred much more to memories involving personal hardship such as shortages, bombings, and occupation. These results showed a difficulty among the German population to possess memories which depict their own country as an aggressor and committer of atrocities. They rather had a tendency to hold memories similar to that of victims which invoke individual feelings of hardship and sacrifice (Forty & Küchler, 1999).

The results for Japan, however, were rather contrasting. The mention of Hiroshima was only found in 20 out of 843 respondents despite the event of the atomic bombing being prominent in the memories of people around the world (Schuman & Corning, 2012). This is in contrast to the German example as the events in Hiroshima represent Japan as a victim rather than a victimizer (Buruma, 1994). It also suggests that the trauma of Hiroshima is remembered as a localised collective memory rather than that experienced by the whole population.

The findings show that the lack of responses to traumatic events of Hiroshima and the Holocaust is similar to the results in victor countries. That is that individuals, and the public at large, are much more concerned with the personal impacts these events had on their lives and not the broader political or historical meaning. Academics and politicians, however, analyse the symbolic and political implications of these events more than the individuals who possess the collective memories of them (Middleton & Brown, 2005).

1.3 Conclusion

For Japan, the remembrance of the war has been a contentious issue in international relations. The Japanese population is said to suffer ‘collective amnesia’ when it comes to their war time past (Stone & Hirst, 2014). While this collective forgetting can be interpreted as a response to Japan being characterized as an aggressor and victimizer, it also encompasses forgetting of the atomic bomb of Hiroshima, and Japan being the victim. Hiroshima holds a prominent place in the collective memory of many societies around the world and the city has become a place for the promotion of world peace. Despite this, the collective memory of Hiroshima among the Japanese remains contested. Yasukuni, equally holds a divisive position in Japan’s collective memory. The associated museums to the two sites analysed in this study are often presented as possessing competing narratives of the Asia-Pacific War. Analysis of these narratives, and the effects they have on the Japanese populous, however, suggests a level of complementarity in their effect on the nation’s collective war memory and Japanese identity. It reveals a more complex area of study than the over-simplistic perspective of historical revisionism equating to victim consciousness. The categorising of Japan’s collective memory as ‘collective amnesia’ is not as comprehensible as is commonly purported among Western scholars. In this study, analysis of symbols, museum content, visitor comments, and public discourse aims to produce a more balanced understanding of Japan’s selective remembering and forgetting and the effect this has in shaping a sense of national identity.

Chapter 2: Yasukuni

“Your noble spirit rests in the shrine of Yasukuni, my son. But why don’t you come visit your mother every now and then, at least in her dreams.” – Tribute to a Japanese soldier killed in China. (Takenaka, 2015, p. 9)

2.1 Background

This chapter analyses the role Yasukuni Shrine and the associated Yūshūkan Museum plays in Japan’s collective memory beginning with an outline of the sites’ history and development, the “Yasukuni Problem”, interpretation of its symbols, collective forgetting, and museum content and its effect on visitors. Throughout this chapter focus will be given to three main aspects of collective memory related to Yasukuni; national remembrance of war dead, the spirits of the war dead, and collective forgetting. This will contribute to an understanding of the sense of national identity and belonging among Japanese people and the divisive nature of Yasukuni in Japanese society. Emphasis of the relationship between the living and the dead presented at Yasukuni is integral to its collective memory and is inextricably linked to historical war narratives (Sakamoto, 2015). This has resulted in collective forgetting of certain aspects of the war among the population.

A Site of National Trauma

With the surrender of Japan in 1945, the Japanese population was faced with the shame of meeting a catastrophic defeat. The post-war society now possesses memories of a nation with a discredited and stigmatized past. The defeat of a country in war can have a profound effect on the trajectory of a nation’s consciousness and henceforth produce a ‘culture of defeat’ (Schivelbusch, 2003). In order to recover from this ‘national

trauma', a defeated country produces war narratives to aid understanding of what happened (Takenaka, 2015). In doing so, its people are able to process the failures of the nation, mourn and memorialise the war dead, and apportion blame on those responsible for waging a war that was unwinnable. In the case of Japan, the post-war society has been heavily influenced by this national trauma which has resulted in schisms in historical narratives and put into question Japan's war responsibility. This has shaped different collective memories about the war within Japanese society.

The national trauma of the war is a vital part of Japanese collective memory and continues to be a discordant and contested subject, one which is used by conservative groups to promote historical revisionism and glorify militarism. Under the current Abe administration, a concerted effort has been made to expand Japan's military ability by amending the pacifist clause of the Japanese Constitution (Osaki & Kikuchi, 2017). The national trauma of the war is often cited by those calling for the preservation of Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution, however nationalists and conservatives in the society directly challenge this 'pacifist' narrative (Basu, 2016). The current governments' sympathy with nationalist groups, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's familial conservatism, and the sense that Japan has expressed sufficient contrition for wartime aggression, have produced a collective memory which identifies strongly with a sense of national pride and 'Japaneseness' (Takenaka, 2015). This is manifested through the narrative that Yasukuni represents which utilises the concept of death by producing a sense of the 'dead among the living' to shape its collective memory (Takenaka, 2015).

History

Yasukuni Shrine is located in central Tokyo's Chiyoda Ward, a few hundred metres from the grounds of the Imperial Palace (Yasukuni Jinja, 2018d). The site was established in 1869 to honour the spirits of those who died during the *Boshin Sensō* (Japanese Civil War), fighting for Emperor Meiji (reign 1867-1912) against the Tokugawa Shogunate government (Kublin, 1949; Takenaka, 2015). A literal translation of the name, Yasukuni, is 'pacifying the nation', and the shrine states that it was

intended to: “bring peace to the homeland [...] build a peaceful nation” (Yasukuni Jinja, 2018a). This foundation of Yasukuni also reflects the restoration of the Imperial powers in Japan in 1868. The emperor was re-established as the head of state and called for Shinto to be the state religion. This was modelled on the European tradition of having a national religion with the sovereign as its head (McArthur, 2011). Thus, Yasukuni, became the central religious site for national commemoration of military service deaths. Presently, the shrine holds period commemoration ceremonies on specific state anniversaries, such as the end of World War Two, as well as occasions in line with Shinto practices. These events are manifestations of the collective memory which Yasukuni purports and recreate the memories of the dead.

Yasukuni has 2,466,000 souls enshrined within it, all of which have fought in wars for Japan up until 1945 (McArthur, 2011). While the remains of the dead are not housed at the site, their spirits are said to reside within it. The enshrinement of the deceased is decided by the priests of Yasukuni. The process is complete after a ceremony involving the writing of the deceased’s names on wooden boards and the placing of them in the *Reijibo Hoanden* (Repository for the Symbolic Registry of Deities) (Yasukuni Jinja, 2018d). The enshrined henceforth become deities and are regarded as possessions of the nation (Higurashi, 2013). This process, however, has created consternation from some bereaved families who disapprove of their loved ones being commemorated in this way (Takenaka, 2015). These ‘souls’ are an important aspect in the shaping of collective memory by evoking a sense of national pride.

Post-war Yasukuni

In 1947, Yasukuni became a private religious institution with the enactment of the Japanese Constitution and its Article 20 which separates religion and state (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, 1947). Many war-bereaved military families felt the new constitution had led to the deaths of their loved ones enshrined at Yasukuni no longer being officially recognised by the state (Takenaka, 2015). The *Izokukai* (Bereaved Families of the War Dead) was thus created and became instrumental in the

development of Yasukuni's relationship with the state and the aspect of the family in collective war memory (Takenaka, 2015). A number of these families have connections to political elites within the government and often used as justification for state support of Yasukuni (Higurashi, 2013). The collective memory of these families has become an integral aspect of shaping public debate around the war (Schwartz, 1991).

The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), which has been the ruling party for most of the years since 1955, championed the cause of the Izokukai in the post-war decades (Takenaka, 2015). The LDP in association with the Izokukai, introduced five bills during the 1960s and 1970s calling for the restoration of state-sanctioned support for Yasukuni. These attempts all failed to pass in the Diet, however they demonstrated the commitment of the LDP to the cause of the Izokukai in striving for state recognition of the deceased (Higurashi, 2013). This created public debate of the place that Yasukuni Shrine holds in Japanese society and how the nation's war dead should be remembered.

The “Yasukuni Problem”

From 1946 to 1948, the International Military Tribunal for the Far East (Tokyo Tribunal) was convened to try military and political leaders of the Empire of Japan for suspected war crimes (Takenaka, 2015). The crimes committed by the criminals were designated into three categories: Class A – crimes against peace, Class B – conventional war crimes, Class C – crimes against humanity (Lukner, 2015). At the end of the tribunal, some 1,618 individuals were convicted of war crimes including fourteen verdicts of Class A designation (Lukner, 2015). In 1954, the Ministry of Health and Welfare set up a system to work with Yasukuni by providing information regarding details of deceased war veterans which the institution enshrined periodically in subsequent years (Higurashi, 2013). The following decade, in 1966, the Ministry provided information to the shrine of the fourteen convicted Class A war criminals, all of which had received the death penalty at the Tokyo Tribunal including the wartime prime minister Hideki Tojo (Higurashi, 2013). This demonstrates the intention of the

government to shape Japan's collective war memory by exonerating the convicted wartime leadership through the deification process at Yasukuni.

The head priest Tsukuba Fujimaru, resisted enshrinement of the convicted individuals despite the shrine passing a resolution to do so (Takenaka, 2015). After Fujimaru's death in 1978, the new head priest Nagayoshi Matsudaira enshrined the fourteen Class A criminals in a unpublicised, clandestine ceremony (Higurashi, 2013). Matsudaira had long rejected the validity of the Tokyo Tribunal and its verdicts. The enshrinement of the war criminals was revealed the following year and exposed state advocacy for military nationalism through the vehicle of Yasukuni (Lee, 2018).

The contested nature of Yasukuni in collective memory was most clearly evident when the site received Imperial disapproval. Wartime Emperor Hirohito (reign, 1926-1989) refused to ever visit the shrine again upon learning of the war criminals' enshrinement in 1979 (South China Morning Post, 2018). Nevertheless, commemorating of the enshrined is still cited by conservative politicians today as justification for state support of Yasukuni (South China Morning Post, 2016). This demonstrates the



Figure 1 - Yasukuni Shrine Precinct. Image downloaded from <https://earth.google.com/web> in December 2018

interconnectedness of Yasukuni and the government in shaping a national collective memory of the war by employing remembrance of the ‘souls’ of the deceased.

2.2 Mnemonic Devices

Statues and memorials within the Yasukuni precinct (see *figure 1*) perform important mnemonic¹ functions in collective memory. Through semiotics², a better understanding of the meanings behind them can be established. This allows interpretation of the collective memory which Yasukuni elicits, and the function statues and memorials play within it. Their relevance to collective memory can be defined by Schwartz (1991) who stated that:

statues provided ways of thinking about assimilation [...], ways of reading different aspects of [...] life. Like other commemorative devices, they were less instrumental, in the sense of producing practical effects, than semiotic, in the sense of formulating meaning.

The formulation of meaning through ‘commemorative devices’ is thus indicative of a culture’s interpretation of the past. By supposing this theory on Yasukuni, understanding of the historical and contemporary function of statues and memorials within the site can be established to provide more insight into its collective memory.

¹ Aiding or designed to aid the memory. Relating to the power of memory
(<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/mnemonic>)

² The study of signs and symbols and their use or interpretation
(<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/semiotics>)

Statue to Masujirō Ōmura



Figure 2 - Statue of Masujirō Ōmura downloaded from www.muza-chan.net in December 2018



Figure 3 - Entrance to Yasukuni Shrine with Statue of Masujirō Ōmura in background. Taken by the author in July 2016

At the entrance of Yasukuni Shrine stands a statue the founder of Japan's modern Imperial Army, Masujirō Ōmura (1824-1869), shown in *figures 2 and 3* (Augustyn et al., 2018). The statue stands as the tallest in the whole Yasukuni precinct and was erected in 1893 as the first Western-style bronze statue in Japan (Yasukuni Jinja, 2018d). During his lifetime, Ōmura was instrumental in bringing an end to the feudal system and Japan's self-imposed isolation. This gained him notability as a precocious strategist and after the reestablishment of Imperial rule with the Meiji Restoration in 1868, he was made minister of military affairs (Kublin, 1949).

In 1869, however, Ōmura was assassinated by a group of remaining samurai while visiting military schools in Kyoto (Augustyn et al., 2018). Nevertheless, the foundation he laid for the establishment of the Imperial Army was not forgotten and the bronze statue erected to him now sits in the main promenade leading to the entrance of Yasukuni Shrine.

At the time of its erection in 1893, 24 years after the death of Ōmura, Japan was experiencing one of the most rapid modernisations of any country in history (Augustyn

et al., 2018). By erecting the statue of the Imperial Military's founder, this demonstrated to the population the importance of the army to Japan, its society, modernisation, and Yasukuni (Kublin, 1949). The statue was cast in bronze and in a Western style and was reflective of Japan's desire to match the West, however depicts Ōmura in a traditional *hakama* (male kimono) with a samurai sword; a connection to Japan's traditional values. These values include bravery until the last, total loyalty to the emperor, and honourable death as the highest service to the nation (Takenaka, 2015). The irony is that Ōmura was said to have taken offence to the continued donning of samurai clothing by his peers after the Meiji Restoration (Augustyn et al., 2018). This shows the manipulation of memory by the designers of the statue (Schwartz, 1991).

The statue of Ōmura has enabled Yasukuni to distinguish him as a significant figure "infusing the past with moral meaning" (Schwartz, 1991, p. 302). It relates to an image of the past that is one in which the Imperial Army was crucial to Japan and its people. It elicits a collective memory within the visitor of a venerable and respectable military. These values are also frequently referred to in displays within the Yūshūkan Museum. The statue stands as a tribute not only to Ōmura, but the Imperial Army. An army which was responsible for atrocities and war crimes committed in Korea, China, Greater East Asia, and the Pacific.

Memorial Monument to Radhabinod Pal

Yasukuni has become renowned for its manufacturing of historical narratives in order to inspire patriotism. This produces collective forgetting and validates the re-examining of historical facts. The manipulation of memory is evident in memorials which misappropriate past individuals of historical prominence.



Figure 4 - Monument to Dr. Pal. Image downloaded from <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/jpg> in December 2018

In the grounds of Yasukuni is a memorial to Justice Radhabinod Pal of India (1886 – 1967), shown in *figure 4* (Yasukuni Jinja, 2018d). Pal was the sole Indian judge on the panel of eleven judges appointed by the United Nations to the Tokyo Tribunal. The memorial was erected in 2005 and displays a photograph of the judge in his court dress on a stone background (Yasukuni Jinja, 2018d). Engraved in the stone is a translation of one of Pal's quotes:

When time shall have softened passion and prejudice, when Reason shall have stripped the mask from misrepresentation, then Justice, holding evenly her scales, will require much of past censure and praise to change places. (Yasukuni Jinja, 2018d).

There is a place holder for flowers, and also a case containing free papers explaining, in both English and Japanese, the significance of Pal to the Japanese people. A similar monument to Pal was erected after his death in Kyoto's Ryozen Gokoku Shrine (Nakajima, 2011). Pal is remembered for his issuing of a dissentient assessment at the conclusion of the Tokyo Tribunal.

The *Dissentient Judgment of Justice Pal* stated that there was no legal basis for the prosecution of all Class A defendants, as well as a significant number of Class B and Class C defendants (Nakajima, 2011). In Pal's eyes, the constitution of the tribunal was flawed as it allowed for the charges of crimes which were not specified under international law at the time they were committed. He argued that these crimes could not be cited retrospectively. Conservative groups laud Pal as a defender of the Japanese people. Due to his not being Japanese, the exoneration of Pal provides these groups with a sense of international validation for their assertions. Yasukuni states that: "Among all the judges of the tribunal, he was the only one who submitted judgment which insisted all defendants were not guilty" (Yasukuni Jinja, 2018d).

Misappropriation of Pal

Since the tribunal, Pal has become a symbol of validation for the historical revisionism appropriated at Yasukuni, despite Article 11 of the 1951 Treaty of San Francisco stating that: "Japan accepts the judgements of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East" (United Nations, 1951, p. 56). Pal's image has been used to reshape collective memory of the war. His judgements, however, have been largely misappropriated. His dissentient judgment asserted that under a different structure with the appropriate legal parameters for a fair and just trial, the accused would still have been convicted as the evidence of their 'devilish' acts was indisputable (Nakajima, 2011).

Historical revisionists and many members of the political elite, including Prime Minister Abe, however, exonerate Justice Pal. They ignore the claims of undeniable evidence of atrocities and war crimes referred to in his 1,235-page report (Nakajima, 2011). This interpretation of the judgement demonstrates the shaping of a collective memory that absolves Japan of any war responsibility by selectively choosing which aspects of Pal's judgement to memorialise, and in the process produce a collective forgetting.

As Danto (1985, p. 153) states: “...monuments are triumphalist and represent a celebration of victory.” In this definition, the *Monument to Dr. Pal* at Yasukuni can be viewed as a victory for the misappropriation of Pal to justify the validation of reshaping collective memory and historical inaccuracies. The erection of the memorial is not only dedicated to an outspoken judge, it is a ‘monument’ to a shaped collective memory. One that forgets aspects of Japan’s wartime history of aggression and associated crimes and validates the valour and bravery of the soldiers and people who sacrificed their lives for the country. It also shows how memory is co-opted to aid a sense of national identity and pride in being Japanese through Pal’s supposed ‘defence of the Japanese people’ (Yasukuni Jinja, 2018d). This collective memory has been openly supported by the state and allows for further validation of historical revision (Birdwhistell, 2017). In the process, it overlooks and elides the “disagreeable” elements of Japan’s history.

2.3 Collective Forgetting

The collective forgetting that is produced by Yasukuni Shrine is reflected among the historical knowledge of many young Japanese. In interviews conducted by the Japan Times (2017), young people were said to: “[seldom discuss] the historical significance of Aug. 15 (anniversary of the surrender of Japan) or the political tensions surrounding [Yasukuni] shrine.” (Miura, 2017). A survey conducted by NHK of 18- and 19-year-olds showed that 14% did not know the significance of August 15 despite it being an extremely historically significant day in the nation’s history (Takahashi & Aramaki, 2016). Professor Tsuyoshi Fujii of Meiji University analysed these results stating that: “the figures could reflect how some history courses in middle and high schools do not cover the war.” (Miura, 2017). A 19-year-old university student of Tokyo stated that the history of the war which he was taught at school:

[...] traced over the period without delving too deeply into detail. Japan’s role in the war, or its consequences, rarely come up in conversations among friends. And my parents were born after the war, so the topic doesn’t really come up at home as well. (Miura, 2017)

This suggests a collective forgetting not only among young people, but their parents' generation as well. The way in which history is taught in schools, and its impact on subsequent generations, is a salient aspect in understanding the effectiveness of the collective memory associated with Yasukuni.

Textbooks

Public schools across Japan are provided with a list of history textbooks from which to teach which is compiled by the Ministry of Education (Inuzuka, 2013). In many of these history textbooks, details of the atrocities committed by the Japanese in Asia, such as germ warfare and biological weapons experimentation on Chinese civilians, is largely omitted. This produces collective forgetting among the students who use them which uniformly affects the collective memory of Japanese society (McCurry, 2018; Weng, 1998; Yamane, 1998).

In 1997, Professor Emeritus of the Tokyo University of Education, Saburō Iyenaga, won a 32-year-long case to have Japan's germ warfare and the Nanking Massacre written into Japanese history textbooks (Yamane, 1998). The Nanking Massacre of 1937 was an offensive on the city of Nanking, the Chinese capital at the time. Estimates of the number of Chinese killed, the majority of whom were civilians, range from 40,000 to 300,000 (Weng, 1998). The Tokyo Tribunal concluded that the death toll in the incident numbered over 200,000 with the number of rapes at 20,000 (Nakajima, 2011). The ruling forced the Ministry of Education to include this history as well as the existence of Unit 731, a biological weapons test facility run by the Japanese in China, and the forced prostitution of women by the Imperial Army (McCurry, 2018; Yamane, 1998).

While this was a success for the teaching of an accurate history, no requirements as to the level of detail to be provided were given, thus, many textbooks subsequently only included brief details of the atrocities. More focus is given, therefore, to the atomic

bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the associated sense of victimhood. In the process, a collective forgetting of Japan's history of transgression results (Yamane, 1998). The collective memory of conservative political figures purports this forgetting by supporting the narrative presented at Yasukuni Shrine and its Yūshūkan museum.

Abe and Grandfather Kishi

Current prime minister Shinzo Abe's support of Yasukuni has been largely influenced by the collective memory of his family. He has stated that much of his conservatism comes from his grandfather and former prime minister Nobusuke Kishi (in office, 1957-1960)(Driscoll, 2010). This memory, however, has produced forgetting of Kishi's war criminal history.

Kishi was an influential figure in the government of the Japanese puppet state of Manchukuo (present-day Manchuria) which existed from 1932 to 1945. He viewed the 34 million Chinese in Manchukuo as a resource to be exploited for the good of Japan (Driscoll, 2010). Kishi's harsh and brutal treatment of the local people and forced enslavement earned him the title 'the Showa-era monster' (Kapur, 2011). In 1940, Kishi became munitions minister in Tojo Hideki's cabinet. During the Asia-Pacific War, Kishi was responsible for the forced labour of some 670,000 Koreans and 40,000 Chinese, the survivors of which were few (Driscoll, 2010). After the war, he was charged with Class A war crimes and held in prison for three years before being released (Kapur, 2011).

As a strong critic of the judgments of the Tokyo Tribunal, Kishi often used Justice Pal's dissent to legitimize his assertions of the verdicts' invalidity (Nakajima, 2011). Abe's citing of Kishi in influencing his conservatism could reflect his support of the historical narrative represented through Yasukuni. The production of collective forgetting of war crimes thus exonerates the image of his grandfather and could explain his affinity with Yasukuni. This may not only be an association of a purely political nature, but a deeply personal one as well. The familial memory of Abe is therefore affected by the present

controversy surrounding Yasukuni (Halbwachs & Coser, 1992). Criticism of the narrative of Yasukuni could strengthen his resolve in affirming support of the institution and, in turn, validate the memory of his grandfather.

Nippon Kaigi

Abe and 80 per cent of his cabinet are members of *Nippon Kaigi* (The Japan Conference) (Sugano, 2016). The Prime Minister himself and Deputy Prime Minister Taro Aso serve as special supreme advisors to Nippon Kaigi which is often portrayed in the media as a group adhering to traditional Japanese values through the observance of Shinto rituals (Kim, 2014). Nippon Kaigi, however, consists of a diverse collection of conservative political figures and lawmakers, academics, business people, lobbyists, and religious groups. These groups all share nationalist sentiments encompassed by Nippon Kaigi's five principles, two of which relate to the shaping of collective memory: 'Patriotic education' and 'Correcting historical narratives' (Sugano, 2016). These are both achieved through various means such as supporting the revision of history textbooks and modifying museum content. They largely draw on the concepts of 'dead among the living' and stress the importance of remembering the souls of the deceased. In doing so, they elicit collective forgetting of the more unsavoury aspects of Japan's wartime history (Sugano, 2016). Barry Schwartz (1991, p. 306) stated that:

Images of the past bear the imprint of the present not because of an impersonal affinity between them but because of the actions of people who feel deeply about both, and in some measure successfully impose their convictions upon contemporaries.

The Prime Minister and his Cabinet's large representation within Nippon Kaigi, therefore, demonstrates a desire to shape the collective memory of the war for the national interest. Yasukuni represents this state-sanctioned, 'ideal' collective memory and receives government approval and support for it (Birdwhistell, 2017). It serves as a vehicle for the fulfilment of Nippon Kaigi's principles.

2.4 Yūshūkan

“We cannot but express the deepest sense of regret to our allied nations of East Asia, who have consistently cooperated with the Empire toward the emancipation of East Asia.” – Emperor Hirohito, August 14, 1945.

Located next to Yasukuni Shrine is the associated Yūshūkan military museum. This institution presents, in detail and depth, all of the collective memory for which Yasukuni stands. The narrative of the museum glorifies the Imperial Japanese army’s expansionism during the Asia-Pacific War and portrays Japan as a liberator of Asian peoples from Western colonialism. This history does not refer to the Imperial Army’s acts of aggression into Asia as ‘invasions’, but rather as ‘advances’ (Yamane, 2017). It also displays no evidence of the victimisation inflicted on the people of the Asia-Pacific region (McArthur, 2011). This produces a collective forgetting among the visitors to the museum and draws on the concept of ‘dead among the living’ to create a collective memory which imbues a sense of national pride (Sakamoto, 2015). This revisionist narrative is affirmed by the various conservative nationalist groups such as Nippon Kaigi, as well as political elites including Prime Minister Abe and members of his Cabinet.

Analysis of the content of the museum allows interpretation of the collective memory it aims to elicit. The use of ‘somatic markers’ is employed in the museum to produce an affinity with the dead among the visitors (Damasio et al., 1996). The term ‘somatic’ refers to something relating to the body rather than the mind. The effect of somatic markers is experienced at a preconscious level. In this essence, an idea, object, or symbol is sufficiently repeated in order to induce an effective response (Damasio et al., 1996). As Sakamoto (2015, p. 174) states: “[this produces] condensed meaning and feeling”. In the Yūshūkan, repeated themes of death produce a sense of connection of the living to the deceased (Sakamoto, 2015). This enables susceptible reception of the revised history that the museum portrays and leads to collective forgetting.

Eirei

At Yasukuni, the lives of the war dead are seen as martyrs to the nation. This sense of martyrdom allows their deaths meaning and contributes to a sense of national belonging. The Yūshūkan states that: “the displays help us understand the spiritual connections of the enshrined with their bereaved families” (Yasukuni Jinja, 2018b). The concept of the *eirei* (spirits of war dead) is essential to understanding this connection. In the Yūshūkan, the narratives around the *eirei* are presented in an evocative and heroic way in order to create a sense of national belonging and pride (Sakamoto, 2015). The museum clearly explains this on its website through the following statement:

Looking at the artefacts and documents displayed in the Yūshūkan allows us to appreciate the joy of life to live as Japanese, the preciousness of life, and the importance of peace. (Yasukuni Jinja, 2018b).

This demonstrates that the purpose and intent of the displays is to create patriotism and a sense of national identity and pride with visitors.

The Yūshūkan offers redemption to the war dead by presenting their sacrifice as a contributing factor to the prosperity of Japan. This narrative around the *eirei* can be seen in the display of the story of the Japanese battleship *Yamato*, the largest battleship ever built. As the ship was being bombarded by American bombers and its sinking was imminent, the captain stated: “If Japan does not come to its senses now, when will it be saved? We will lead the way. We will die as harbingers of Japan’s new life. That’s where our real satisfaction lies.” (Hashimoto, 2015, p. 20). The death of the ship’s crew is thus not in vain, despite the defeat of Japan. Their death is a sacrifice given to the nation in order that it rebuilds anew (Sakamoto, 2015). This appreciation to the *eirei* for the prosperity Japan enjoys today is evident among visitors to the museum and is an integral part of the collective memory produced.

Kamikaze

Death permeates the large amount of the Yūshūkan exhibits. No more is this apparent than in the displays of *kamikaze* fighters. The kamikaze, literally ‘divine wind’, were male soldiers, some as young as 18, sent on suicide missions against American ships during the Asia-Pacific War (Takenaka, 2015). Many Western historians cite the irrationality and desperation of the Japanese military as motivation for the deployment of kamikaze. Conversely, they are viewed as being akin to contemporary suicide bombers by psychologists and a result of exceptional state coercion (Sakamoto, 2015).

At the Yūshūkan, however, the Kamikaze are portrayed as the ultimate expression of self-sacrifice for the country and this theme is the overriding aspect of their exhibitions. Photographs of the hundreds of determined-looking pilots are displayed all around and are coupled with letters to and from families, final wills, and bride dolls given by mothers to unwed soldiers (Sakamoto, 2015). A selection of the last messages from the soldiers are displayed monthly at the front of Yasukuni Shrine in order to: “share the thoughts of the noble souls who gave up their lives for the country they loved” (Yasukuni Jinja, 2018c). In this way, kamikaze are portrayed as tragic heroes of the nation propagating their deaths as sacrifices for the current prosperity of Japan. They have become an extremely emotive aspect of the Yūshūkan’s objective to elicit a collective memory imbued by death and grief. The kamikaze are essential to the ‘imagined community’ which links the living with the dead (Anderson & O’Gorman, 2016).

Through the employment of the kamikaze and deceased soldiers as somatic markers, a connection between the public memory and individually experienced emotions is established (Connolly, 2002). This demonstrates why the Yūshūkan and Yasukuni have remained popular places in Japan despite the revised history and controversy surrounding them. The use of somatic markers to shape collective memories among the population can help to explain the continued regard of Yūshūkan as an historical institution today (Sakamoto, 2015).

2.5 Visitor Comments

The appeal of the Yūshūkan can be seen in its selection of comments written in its visitors' book which are published on the museum's website. The space for writing comments comes at the conclusion of all of the exhibitions. It is a spacious room lined with pictures of the soldiers, "almost as if they are watching the writers of the comments" (Sakamoto, 2015, p. 172). As all of the displays evoke a feeling of the dead walking alongside the living in this 'imagined community', the environment in which the visitors write their comments is permeated by somatic markers (Anderson & O'Gorman, 2016). This 'condensed sense of feeling' is also aided by played recordings of previous visitors' comments creating an example for people to follow (Sakamoto, 2015). There are five visitors' books for people to sign giving ample time for the writers to think of what to write, and also view comments by previous visitors for inspiration (Sakamoto, 2015).

The selected comments published on the Yūshūkan website commonly express a sense of pride in being Japanese. This is especially apparent among young visitors to the museum. Frequently used words such as 'pride', 'sacrifice', 'honour' indicate the effectiveness of somatic markers used throughout the exhibitions. An overwhelming usage of the word 'gratitude' has also been seen among the comments from the visitors (Sakamoto, 2015). The emotive portrayals of the kamikaze, displays of letters sent to and from the front, as well as personal photographs and possessions create an overriding theme of death which elicits emotional responses. The image of the kamikaze is used to especially appeal to people's emotions and affect sympathetic sentiment (Sakamoto, 2015).

These emotions, however, enable collective feelings to be imbued. Ahmed (2001, p. 345) states that: "[emotions] align individuals with collectives [...] through the very intensity of their attachments.". This alignment of individual's emotions with the

collective memory of Japan's war, or rather Japan's sacrifice, is evident in the emotive comments of the visitors.

Data Set

Below are translations by the author of a number of poignant comments which demonstrate this connection of the visitors to collective memory. While the visitors' book is not a true representation of all feelings experienced by each visitor, it gives an insight into the types of emotions that are felt. By selecting a sample of these comments from each year and publishing them on their website, the Yūshūkan is able to manufacture a certain collective memory to people who may not have yet visited. Many of the comments refer to people wishing they had visited earlier, or their desire to come back and tell their friends and family to visit. This promotes the 'collective feeling' of Yūshūkan, one which relates to Japanese identity, pride in one's nation, and a shared feeling of being 'Japanese' with common values and history (Sakamoto, 2015). It also evokes gratitude for being born in a peaceful time due to the sacrifices of the eirei. Visitors to Yūshūkan often write of their pride in the nation of Japan and their gladness of having Japanese identity. The comments below from the Yasukuni Jinja (2017) website demonstrate the eliciting of a collective memory in which the 'dead are among the living'. This common technique is used to shape collective memories in museums and is apparent in the following visitor remark:

I often use the phrase "die!" when I'm joking around with my friends. After coming to Yasukuni, however, I was able to understand the real meaning of death from the people for which this place is dedicated. They surely experienced misery and chagrin. I will make the most of the life I have now thanks to those who fell protecting Japan. Thank you so much.

The following comments indicate eliciting of a sense of national pride and gratitude to the dead:

Thank you for building up our nation of Japan. I am so glad I was born in this country of Japan. – Female, 24.

I now know that those who fought and died in the Asia-Pacific war, in order to protect Japan, were us Japanese. That is why we now live in a peaceful country. I will live every day in gratitude. – Male, junior high school student.

Thank you for fighting for Japan. – Male, 14

It is apparent by the age of the writers that the Yūshūkan is frequented by youth, and even school children, to effective appeal.

Targeting the Youth

In researching these comments, a targeting of younger visitorship was observed. This is evident in the choice of visitor comments published on the website. Of the thirty-six comments by visitors who specified their age, twenty-six were under the age of forty, with the youngest being eleven-years-old (Yasukuni Jinja, 2017). Furthermore, the Yūshūkan website's three-minute video explaining the artefacts, displays and purpose of the museum also documents the comments of three visitors under the age of forty (Yasukuni Jinja, 2018b). Their comments all express gratitude to the eirei for the peace Japan enjoys today. As younger people are further removed in time and space from the war, they are more likely to hold malleable memories of it. The Yūshūkan's selectivity of comments thus demonstrates an attempt to shape collective memory of the war.

Yūshūkan has been making efforts to attract more adherents to its revisionist narrative. The establishment of the *Yūshūkan tomo no kai* (Friends of the Yūshūkan Association) is one way the museum promotes visitorship, with particular incentives

for young people. For a yearly fee of 1,000 yen³ members who are under 25 years of age receive museum admission including opportunities to: “attend symposia, study groups and nature camps geared to themes associated with Yasukuni” (Takenaka, 2015, p. 181). The educating of the younger generation through emotional effect is thus a crucial aspect of Yasukuni’s shaping of collective memory (Lee, 2018). The transmitting of this revised history to subsequent generations therefore prevents any resolution to national contestation around war memory (Lee, 2018). While the perceived intention of these efforts is to inspire nationalism, a 2015 Gallup survey showed that the Japanese are the least patriotic people in the world, and the least likely to take up arms for their country (Hachima, 2015). This indicates that despite Yasukuni’s prompting of national pride among visitors, a sense of nonviolence and pacifism is the overriding notion behind a sense of Japanese identity.

2.6 Conclusion

Yasukuni has allowed the history of war to be inextricably linked to a sense of national pride and belonging through the use of symbols, collective forgetting, and the Yūshūkan’s content and educational efforts. The collective memory this produces centres around the souls of the war dead who are at the very heart of Yasukuni and ‘enshrine’ the institution itself in the national psyche. What is evident, however, is the manipulation of war discourse to further nationalistic objectives. The eirei are utilised to evoke sympathy and sorrow in visitors and produce a sense of Japanese identity made possible by depictions of their sacrifices to the nation. This associated historical revisionism and reshaping of collective memory receives government validation and support. Yasukuni’s place in Japanese society, therefore, will likely continue to be prominent notwithstanding contested.

³ Approximately \$13 (NZD)

Chapter 3: Abe's Visit

"The peace and prosperity Japan enjoys today is not created only by those who are living." - Shinzo Abe

3.1 The Visit

Political recognition of Yasukuni Shrine has exacerbated much of the "Yasukuni Problem" in public debate within Japan and overseas. The issue has been most prevalent during visits of Prime Ministers to Yasukuni. This chapter outlines the background of previous visits, public debate around the time of Prime Minister Abe's 2013 visit and how it shaped collective memory, the stated justification for visiting, and the domestic and political ramifications which followed.

Background

In 1985, the first visit by a standing Japanese prime minister, Yasuhiro Nakasone, was made to Yasukuni on the fortieth anniversary of the surrender of Japan in the Asia-Pacific War (Takenaka, 2015). The visit saw Nakasone sign the guest register with his official title of Prime Minister before confirming that his visit was made in an official capacity (Ravitch, 2014). It was also revealed that the offering given to the shrine by Nakasone was paid for by public money. This brought strong scrutiny from the public and also made headlines overseas (Ravitch, 2014). The story was run with the additional information about the secret enshrinement of the fourteen Class-A war criminals in 1979. Following this, Nakasone distanced himself from the shrine largely due to the strong criticism he had received internationally (Takenaka, 2015).

The Yasukuni Problem was brought back into the public eye in the 2000s when LDP Prime Minister, Junichiro Koizumi made annual visits to Yasukuni in fulfilment of a

campaign promise (Ravitch, 2014). In response to public criticism, Koizumi stated that he ‘could not understand at all the sentiments of people who were against his worshiping of Japan’s war dead at Yasukuni’ (Li, 2014). His comments drew criticism from East Asian countries and significantly strained Japan’s international relations (Ravitch, 2014). This further exacerbated public debate about Yasukuni, not only for the Prime Minister’s official visits, but also the history the site teaches, the war criminals it enshrines, and the question of family permission for enshrinement. Furthermore, it leads to bigger questions about how Yasukuni affects national identity within society. The public response demonstrated the contested nature of Japan’s collective war memory and the place Yasukuni holds within it.

Current Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has also visited Yasukuni during his political career in several different roles. His most recent and controversial visit was in 2013 as the first sitting Prime Minister since Koizumi to do so (Mainichi Shimbun, 2013). He has since abstained from visiting while many of his cabinet members still visit in official capacities (South China Morning Post, 2016). Abe instead sends offerings to Yasukuni every year using his own private funds (Kim, 2014). This indicates an acceptance of the historical revisionist narrative presented at the Yasukuni site by Japan’s head of state and his government. In turn, right-wing nationalist groups feel vindicated in their assertions of historical inaccuracies. These groups, such as Nippon Kaigi, fervently campaign for historical revisionism and constitutional amendment with government support (Sugano, 2016).

Pre-visit

In December 2012, Shinzo Abe was elected Prime Minister of Japan for the second time in his political career; the first being 2006-2007. The following year on December 26, exactly one year since he took office, he paid a visit to Yasukuni Shrine (ANN News, 2013). The reaction to the visit demonstrated contestation between the differing collective memories surrounding Yasukuni within Japanese society. Data from four of Japan’s most widely-read news agencies, Asahi, Yahoo, TBS, Kyodo and NHK indicated

a plurality of opinions about a prime ministerial visit to Yasukuni which subsequently affected, in part, the decision to refrain from making further visits (Nifutii News, 2017).

Prior to the visit, Asahi News had conducted a timely survey of 5,500 people between November 6 and December 20 about their thoughts on a Prime Ministerial visit to Yasukuni, as well as further questions regarding Japan's history. The results to the question, "Are you for a visit by the Prime Minister to Yasukuni Shrine?" showed that approximately 60 per cent of respondents were in favour, with a slightly higher margin for respondents in their twenties. In contrast, 22 per cent of respondents aged thirty or older, and only 15 percent among respondents in their twenties, were against a visit. (Kimura, 2013). In the same survey, participants were asked to respond to the question, "Do you think the Asia-Pacific War was a war of invasion, or not a war of invasion?". The results showed that 55 per cent of respondents aged thirty or older agreed that the war was one of invasion, with a lesser amount of 45 per cent of respondents in their twenties concurring. Conversely, of respondents who disagreed, 33 per cent were in their twenties, with a lesser margin of 26 per cent thirty or older (Kimura, 2013).

Due to this being an isolated survey, a trend cannot be observed, however the results indicate that young people are less likely to be against a visit by the Prime Minister to Yasukuni and that a majority are in favour. Yasukuni as a symbol, thus, possesses a relatively low level of contention in young Japanese people's collective memory. Furthermore, it is evident that young people are less inclined to possess a collective memory of Japan's role in the war as one of aggression. This is a narrative purported by the Yūshūkan which presents the war as one of self-defence and liberation and in doing so elicits collective forgetting (Lee, 2018). It could also be concluded that Yasukuni's efforts to educate young people are somewhat effective.

The Visit

The December 26 visit by Abe was made without any prior announcement from the Office of the Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet. Yahoo News (2013) described

the event as: “an electric shock visit”. After leaving Yasukuni, Abe received the media and gave a statement citing his reasons for the visit which his office named, “Pledge for Everlasting Peace” (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, 2013). He expressed that he had paid his respects to the souls of all of those who had fought for the country. Abe referred to the *eirei*, or ‘souls’, a total of six times throughout his statement, and alluded to ‘their sacrifice as enabling the success of Japan today’ a total of five times (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, 2013). In a sense, the repetition of such themes is an attempt to produce verbal somatic markers. In the following remark from Abe’s statement, the concept of the ‘dead among the living’ is clearly evident and provides emotive references to familial relationships:

The peace and prosperity we enjoy today is built on the precious sacrifices of numerous people who perished on the field wishing for the happiness of their loving wives and children, and thinking about their fathers and mothers who raised them. Today, I have contemplated on this, and paid my deepest respects and gratitude on my visit. (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, 2013)

Here, Abe is eliciting the *eirei* and the family in collective memory so as to make his visit understandable and relatable to the public. His repeated references to the *eirei* affirms the concept of the war dead being a ‘possession of the nation’ whom need to be respected and shown gratitude. These remarks bear striking similarity to the visitor comments of the *Yūshūkan* in their gratitude for the sacrifices of the war dead, as well as the references to these sacrifices enabling the peace enjoyed today. These verbal somatic markers are used as justification for the visit while also producing a forgetting of the issue of war criminal enshrinement.

After leaving the main shrine, Abe had subsequently visited the *chinreisha* (spirit pacifying shrine) located next to Yasukuni. In his post-visit statement Abe mentioned his desire to show: “respect to those, regardless of nationality, who lost their lives in the war but have not been enshrined at Yasukuni” (ANN News, 2013). Abe’s reference to non-Japanese victims produces a collective memory which purports that ‘war itself

is the enemy' (Sneider, 2016). This also elicits forgetting by downplaying the acts of aggression and associated crimes while abrogating Japan's war responsibility. In this way, he is shaping his statement so as to primarily emphasise his paying of respect for the war dead as justification for the visit, while also pre-empting criticism from the likes of South Korea and China. Abe attempted to forestall international vexation by expressing the following in his statement:

Regrettably, it is a reality that the visit to Yasukuni Shrine has become a political and diplomatic issue. [...] It is not my intention at all to hurt the feelings of the Chinese and Korean people. It is my wish to [...] build friendship with China and Korea with respect, as did all the previous Prime Ministers who visited Yasukuni Shrine. (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, 2013)

In doing so, Abe further espouses collective forgetting and focuses rather on cordial international relations and reconciliatory statements. His justification for the visit is further validated by referencing previous visits by Japanese Prime Ministers.

Consequently, Abe's visit did draw reprimand from the Korean and Chinese governments due to the perceived collective forgetting of Japan's aggression during World War Two. Yasukuni Shrine is known in the two countries as the 'War Criminals Shrine' (Higurashi, 2013). The response was particularly pronounced in China due to escalations in the Senkaku/Diaoyu⁴ territorial dispute with Japan since 2012 (Dreyer, 2017). The Chinese foreign ministry responded by issuing a statement expressing that: "[the visits are] an effort to glorify Japanese militaristic history of external invasion and colonial rule [and] to challenge the outcome of World War Two" (Higurashi, 2013). The visit was widely condemned by other governments, including from United States President Barack Obama (Mainichi Shimbun, 2013). Yasukuni's divisive nature, and the forgetting it produces, is thus affectual domestically and internationally.

⁴ Three uninhabited islets in the Western Pacific claimed by both China and Japan.

Abe's visit shows that the narrative displayed at the Yūshūkan, and represented through symbol of Yasukuni, is one with which he himself and his government have no issue. The timing of his visit coincided with a comparatively high approval rating at 55.7 per cent and was reported as likely a move to secure more support from the conservative camp (Kimura, 2013).

Post-visit

The reaction to Abe's visit was varied in the Japanese media. National broadcasting organization, NHK, reported the story by stating only the basic details of the visit and running a clip in its news broadcast of Abe's comments without any interpretation or critique (Kimura, 2013). NHK had previously been accused of censorship of war history when Abe told the Asahi Shimbun newspaper that he had been successful in the cancelling of a documentary about "comfort women" on its network (Laurence, 2005). This demonstrated NHK's, and Abe's, attempt to shape collective memory in public debate by eliciting collective forgetting of the Yasukuni controversy stemming from the enshrinement of war criminals and the revisionist history of Yūshūkan (Schwartz, 1991). Other media outlets, however, were much more comprehensive in their coverage.

TBS conducted a survey two days after the visit on December 28. The large sample of 40,717 people showed that a majority 71.2 per cent (28,977) of respondents approved of Abe's visit as opposed to 28.8 per cent (11,740) disapproving (Kimura, 2013). Compared to the aforementioned pre-visit Asahi survey, the TBS sample size was approximately eight times larger and showed a marked increase in positive reactions. This was further affirmed by a survey conducted by Yahoo News (2013) which indicated that 80 per cent of respondents thought that the visit was 'reasonable'. The results of a survey by Sankei News, however, showed that just over half of respondents in their twenties and thirties approved of the visit at 50.6 per cent; a higher proportion than those forty and above at 38.1% (Sankei News, 2014).

The degree to which Abe's comments shaped people's opinions is unclear but considering the similarities of his remarks to the visitor comments at the Yūshūkan, it can be assumed that the concepts of 'dead among the living' and collective forgetting influenced people's perceptions of Yasukuni and the visit itself, particularly among the young.

Conversely, on December 28 and 29, Kyodo News conducted a survey asking whether Abe's visit to Yasukuni was good or bad. This showed contrasting results to those of the other surveys. The majority of respondents believed the visit to be bad. While the sample size is not given, 47.1 per cent of respondents stated that the visit was bad compared to 43.2 per cent stating it was good. Paradoxically, a follow-up question in the same survey asking, "Is consideration to diplomatic relations necessary or unnecessary?" showed that a majority 68.9 per cent agreed that it was necessary as opposed to 25.3 per cent stating it was unnecessary (Kimura, 2013).

This demonstrates that national recognition of Japan's war dead is generally prioritised over the desire among Japanese people to maintain good relations with neighbouring countries. It shows that the collective memory produced by the symbol, narrative, and *eirei* of the Yasukuni site, while contested, is primarily accepted by the population and that recognition of this by the head of state is largely valued. This collective memory has elicited a sense that forgoing warm relations with China and Korea is a worthy sacrifice in order to commemorate the war dead. A sense of national belonging and identity are, thus, produced. This is likely the intention of Abe's visit. In doing so, the collective memory around Yasukuni is affirmed and becomes ever more linked to a sense of being 'Japanese'. It demonstrates that public debate around Yasukuni can be influential in shaping and supporting the collective memory of the war (Schwartz, 1991).

Fallout

The public debate around Abe's visit exposed contestation among the Japanese population regarding the memory of the war. It also had a significant effect on Japan's

international relations. Nikkei News reported that Abe's decision to visit Yasukuni will make it difficult to improve already tense relations with China and South Korea, just as it did when Koizumi visited in 2001-2006 (Nippon Keizai Shimbun, 2013). Following the visit the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that: "For a while, Sino-Japanese and Korea-Japanese relations will not be functional", demonstrating the affective nature of collective war memory in those countries and the disapproval of Japan's perceived forgetting (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2013).

Within Japan, challenges were made against the legality and constitutionality of the visits. In the Osaka High Court, a group of citizens claimed that Abe's visit was a violation of Article 20 of the Japanese Constitution which enshrines the separation of religion and state (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, 1947). The plaintiffs numbered 388 in total and included family members of war dead, some whom have their relatives enshrined at Yasukuni (Mainichi Shimbun, 2017). In February 2017, the Court rejected the case because: "no violation of plaintiffs' rights can be acknowledged", however it did not issue a ruling on the constitutionality of Abe's visit (Mainichi Shimbun, 2017). The plaintiffs submitted an appeal to the Supreme Court but the case was rejected in December 2017 (Kyodo News, 2018).

In 2018, a similar case was presented to the Tokyo High Court by some 450 citizens, including family members of war dead. The plaintiffs stated that: "[the visit] has heightened international tensions and infringed their right to live their lives peacefully." (Kyodo News, 2018). In October 2018, this Court also rejected the case. At the time of writing, however, the plaintiffs are intending to appeal the ruling (Kyodo News, 2018).

These two cases demonstrate that the collective war memory held by the plaintiffs is markedly different than that espoused by Abe and Yasukuni. The visit challenged the collective memory of these groups and thus their identity. The memory of the family members of the war dead was able to be drawn on by all of the individuals in the group to create a shared identity (Halbwachs & Coser, 1992). The 'collection' of memories of

the plaintiffs produced an identity which enabled them to present a challenge to the contrasting collective memory that Yasukuni portrays.

The visit brought to light the differences in the collective memory of ‘the family’, and the sensitivities that certain families have about relatives being enshrined in a place without their consent. It can be assumed that this lack of control over how the memory and commemoration of their loved ones is conducted is disagreeable with a sizeable number of bereaved families. The shaping of the collective memory of the war dead at Yasukuni, therefore, produces a sense of national identity in some, and dissatisfaction in others.

Outcome

Since 2013, Abe has not visited Yasukuni and in 2017 and 2018 neither he nor any ministers of his cabinet paid a visit to the shrine. On August 15, 2018, however, over 50 members of his government visited on the anniversary of the end of World War Two (NHK, 2018). This demonstrates that while the top leadership currently refrain from visiting to avoid political and diplomatic ramifications, the collective memory of a sizeable number of politicians is still shaped by Yasukuni.

In 2017 and 2018, Abe sent his special advisor, Masahiko Shibayama, to represent him at Yasukuni and issue a statement on his behalf. On both occasions Abe stated: “I am sorry I am unable to visit Yasukuni, please pray for the spirits our predecessors.”, again eliciting the concept of the *eirei*, and the war dead as possessions of the nation (NHK, 2018). Incidentally, during the period since his 2013 visit, Abe’s approval ratings have dropped significantly, due in part to his proposals of constitutional amendment to Article 9 (NHK, 2018).

3.2 Conclusion

Abe's reasons for his affinity with Yasukuni centre around the remembering of the eirei, their enabling Japan's peace and prosperity, and the pledge to never wage war again. He also stated his recognising of the sacrifices and contributions which current service men and women give to Japan. This can be linked to the collective memory, presented at Yasukuni and Yūshūkan around the eirei and their sacrifices. It shows how the national trauma of mourning the dead in a defeated country can be shaped to glorify the war dead and furthermore connect their deaths to the contemporary national security situation.

This, however, produces significant collective forgetting of the war criminal enshrinement, the aggression and associated atrocities committed by the Imperial Army, and the abnegation of Japan's war responsibility through historical revision. The public debate around Abe's visit showed the divisive nature of the collective memory of Yasukuni. While support for its narrative is growing among young people, it is likely that future prime ministerial visits will meet the same contestation.

Chapter 4: Hiroshima

“Memories of the atomic bombing have produced narratives of nationhood in Japan...Japan as a victim” - (Naono, 2005, p. 238)

4.1 Background

This chapter analyses the role the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park and the associated Peace Memorial Museum plays in Japan's collective memory beginning with the history of the city, the development of the “Spirit of Hiroshima”, interpretation of symbols within the park, collective forgetting and the role of peace museums, Hiroshima's museum content, and concluding with analysis of visitor comments. Through this chapter focus will be given to three main aspects of the collective memory associated with Hiroshima; peace promotion and preservation, victimhood, and collective forgetting. This will contribute to an understanding of how the collective memory of Hiroshima contributes to a sense of national identity and belonging among Japanese people. Emphasis on the promotion of peace and the stories of the survivors is an integral part of this memory and has resulted in the collective forgetting of Japan's war responsibility and pre-bomb history. This has created a sense of ‘victim consciousness’ in collective war memory.

Post-war Hiroshima

With the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki culminating in the end of the Second World War, a new aspect to warfare was born. On August 7, 1945, the Daily Express in London wrote of the bomb dropped on Hiroshima the previous day: “[it is] a revolutionary weapon destined to change war, or which may even be the

instrumentality to end all wars.” (Thomas, 1945, p. 1). In Hiroshima alone, over 200,000 people died as a result of the single atomic bomb (Naono, 2005). Following Japan’s defeat, the two decimated cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki began to play an active role in promoting nuclear disarmament internationally. Only a decade after the bombings, the local governments of each municipality inaugurated the construction of public spaces, parks, and museums which were dedicated to the memory of the nuclear attacks and their aftermath in order to promote peace (den Dungen, 2006). This was a concerted effort to preserve the memory of the atomic bombing through public spaces and mnemonic devices.

In 1949, Japan’s first ever public referendum was conducted which passed the Hiroshima Peace Memorial City Construction Law with over 90% support (City of Hiroshima, 2000). The purpose of this law is encompassed in Article 1: “It shall be the object of the present law to provide for the construction of the city of Hiroshima as a peace memorial city to symbolize the human ideal of sincere pursuit of genuine and lasting peace.”(City of Hiroshima, 2000, p. 2). In its explanation of this article, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) stated that: “All peoples throughout the world seek genuine and lasting peace as an ideal. The intent of this law was to construct Hiroshima as a city that symbolizes lasting peace and Japan’s renunciation of war.” (UNITAR, 2018). The overwhelming support of the law demonstrates the salience of the bombing in collective memory among the population and the symbolism of Hiroshima to the promotion of peace. Following the result of the referendum, construction of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park began.

Genbaku Dome

The former Hiroshima Prefectural Industrial Promotion Hall was one of the only buildings in the central city that remained largely intact following the dropping of the bomb. After the War it was threatened with demolition, however due to the efforts of citizens, it was preserved (City of Hiroshima, 2000). In 1950, the building was named

the *Genbaku* (atomic bomb) Dome and was designated as an historic site by the City of Hiroshima (2000), shown in *figure 5*.



Figure 5 - Genbaku Dome. Image taken by the author in August 2014

The preservation of sites of historical importance is significant for remembering and promoting peace as Young (1998, p. 12) states: “In our hurry to forget and move on we are in danger of denial – or at least cosmetic tidying up. This too is a task of peace museums and peace culture.”. The Genbaku Dome now stands as a visual reminder to the world of the destruction that nuclear weapons can cause. International recognition was afforded when, in 1996, it was designated a World Heritage site by UNESCO (UNESCO, 2018). This affirmed the importance of the Genbaku Dome as a symbol of the global collective memory of Hiroshima. UNESCO (2018) states that: “[The Genbaku Dome] maintains its functional and spiritual authenticity as a place for prayer for world peace and the ultimate elimination of all nuclear weapons.” The site became an integral part of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park which by 1955 included the Peace Memorial Hall, Museum, Cenotaph for the A-bomb Victims and the City, as well as numerous other monuments (City of Hiroshima, 2000), shown in *figure 6*. The Park as

a whole has been instrumental to the development of the collective memory of Hiroshima.



Figure 6 - Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park. Image downloaded from www.googleearth.com/web in January 2019

Spirit of Hiroshima

Maurice Halbwachs (1992, p. 52) stated that: “every collective memory has unfolded within a spatial framework”. These spatial frameworks are best understood through the analysis of public spaces. The Hiroshima Peace Memorial City Construction Law was a concerted effort to produce societal remembrance through mnemonic devices (Jacobs, 2003). Halbwachs and Coser (1992, p. 54) also stated that: “place and group each received the imprint of the other”. By applying this idea to Hiroshima, the construction of the park has made the post-war society in Japan “conscious of itself” through its own construction of the past (Jacobs, 2003, p. 255). This collective memory manifests most clearly during the commemoration of events. Commemoration ceremonies are held every year in Hiroshima on August 6th; the anniversary of the dropping of the first atomic bomb. The preservation of the past is achieved through the re-creation of it in such memorials and commemorations (Halbwachs & Coser, 1992)

Hiroshima's past has produced a collective memory which is embodied in the so-called 'Spirit of Hiroshima'. One which denounces all war, nuclear weapons and conflict, and upholds the preservation of the memory of Hiroshima in order to maintain and spread peace (Naono, 2005). The various monuments in the Peace Park represent links between the collective memory of victimhood and the promotion of peace (Lee, 2018).

4.2 Semiotics and Mnemonic Devices

Symbolic places within the Peace Memorial Park, such as the Genbaku dome, shape the collective memory of Hiroshima's past. This localization of collective memory has an effect not only on the citizens of the city but also outsiders as well. Visitors are influenced by the collective memory elicited through the mnemonic devices of statues and memorials within the park. Through semiotics, the development of the 'Spirit of Hiroshima', and the collective memory it imbues, can be interpreted.

Statue of Mother and Child in the Storm

In front of the main building of the Peace Memorial Museum, next to the Fountain of Peace stands the 'Statue of Mother and Child in the Storm', shown in *figure 7*. The



Figure 7 - Statue of Mother and Child in the Storm. Image downloaded from www.hiroshima-navi.or.jp in December 2018

Hiroshima Convention & Visitors Bureau (2018) states that: “The feelings of Hiroshima citizens in wishing for peace are expressed in this statue.”. It was erected in 1960 with profits from fundraising efforts by the Hiroshima City Federation of Regional Women’s Organizations (City of Hiroshima, 2018). The group explains their purpose in the choice of this symbol as follows:

A mother cradles her baby tightly in her right arm. With her left arm she tries to lift another child, clinging to her, on her back. She stands in the eye of a storm, taking a strong step forward as her upper body leans down. Her muscular body signifies the power of a mother’s love. As mothers of Hiroshima, we hope to erect this statue to express our determination to eliminate nuclear weapons and convey a silent message of peace to every person who visits this park. (City of Hiroshima, 2018)

The statue has become a site for the gathering of women from Hiroshima to show their stand against nuclear weapons. Every year on August 6, the groups lay origami paper cranes at the base of the statue, a Japanese symbol of peace (Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, 2018).

This is a mnemonic device which presents emotive elements to the viewer in order to affect their memory of the atomic bombing. Its location in front of the museum prompts a sense of civilian affection in war. By physicalising women and children in the statue, the indiscriminate nature of nuclear weapons can be elicited in the viewer. In this way, it is instrumental in ‘formulating meaning’ to the site and indicates Hiroshima people’s interpretation of the past (Schwartz, 1991). It allows the suffering and destruction of the innocent victims of Hiroshima to be embodied (Sakamoto, 2015).

Sadako Sasaki and the Children's Peace Monument

One of the most well-known stories to have come out of Hiroshima is that of Sadako Sasaki. Her story is used to shape the collective memory of Hiroshima and promote peace, particularly among children. In 1958, a statue of Sadako was unveiled in the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park (Sarig, 2009). She holds a paper crane over her head with a monument beneath the statue named “the Tower of a Thousand Cranes” (City of Hiroshima, 2001), shown in *figures 8 and 9*. The site has become a symbol of peace for children across Japan.



Figure 8 - Statue of Sadako Sasaki. Image downloaded from www.hiroshima-navi.com in January 2019



Figure 9 - Children's Peace Monument. Image downloaded from www.japantimes.co.jp in January 2019

Sadako was a two-year-old girl in 1945 when the atomic bomb exploded and, unbeknownst to her and her family, was consequently exposed to harmful levels of radiation (Sarig, 2009). For 10 years Sadako showed no signs of radiation exposure. In 1955, however, she was hospitalised after suddenly falling ill. It was determined that Sadako had contracted leukaemia due to her exposure to high levels of radiation in the early years of her life (Sarig, 2009). Upon her diagnosis, Sadako decided to fold origami cranes from her hospital bed. In Japan, folded origami paper cranes represent long life and her hope was that the folding of 1000 cranes would cure her illness (Coerr &

Himmler, 1979). Her efforts were in vain, however, and she passed away after eight months in hospital.

Sadako's classmates were shocked with her death and began to fundraise and received donations from children all over the world (Sarig, 2009). From this story, the folded origami cranes came to symbolise not only long life, but also peace (City of Hiroshima, 2001). Sadako's life became symbolic of the suffering of the *hibakusha* (atomic bomb survivors). The hibakusha are integral to the collective memory of Hiroshima and remain avid promoters of peace and the total abolition of nuclear weapons (Yamaguchi, 2002).

This memorial adds physical significance to the collective memory of victimhood. It demonstrates the indiscriminate nature of atomic weapons and reaffirms the memory of the innocent casualties which the bombing produced. Sadako's story is taught to school children across Japan as well as in the Peace Memorial Museum with exhibits displaying some of the original paper cranes which she folded herself (Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, 2018). Located in the Peace Memorial Park between the Genbaku dome and the Peace Memorial Museum, the site has been designated as the 'Children's Peace Monument' (City of Hiroshima, 2001). It is continually adorned with large piles of folded paper cranes which are sent to the site from children across Japan and other countries (City of Hiroshima, 2001). The monument has contributed significantly to Hiroshima's promotion of peace.

4.3 Collective Forgetting

Museums of Peace

By the mid 1990s, Japan housed one third of peace museums worldwide. This was the result of municipal and prefectural government decisions to promote peace (den Dungen & Yamane, 2015). Non-governmental bodies also established peace museums, such as Ritsumeikan University's Kyoto Museum for World Peace. These privately-run

museums show balanced narratives around the war, particularly pertaining to the atrocities and aggression of the Japanese during the Asia-Pacific War (Ritsumeikan University, 2015). Publicly-run peace museums, however, such as the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, present a much more muted history of Japan's belligerency.

Young (1998, p. 6) stated that: "Peace museums are not about memorializing, but about remembering. Understanding imagery is a crucial part of this.". Their displays of the damaging effects of war on populations therefore serve to aid remembrance of the victims rather than memorialising their sacrifices (Young, 1998). This contrasts to military museums, such as the Yūshūkan, which serve to memorialise the dead and present them as sacrifices to the nation. They are henceforth shown gratitude for enabling the peace enjoyed today. Peace museums, however, stress 'remembering' as opposed to the passive memorialising of the dead as sacrifices (Young, 1998). They are effective in creating a memory of 'being there' by constructing a history which helps trigger cultural and philosophical reflection (Young, 1998). This is achieved through presenting large-scale displays of the time period including videos, photographs, and personal possessions, as well as somatic markers, to elicit emotion. This content can be updated and altered depending on contemporary circumstances (Halbwachs & Coser, 1992). In the process, some peace museums create inequitable displays of history and produce collective forgetting. The malleability of museum content, thus, enables fluidity in historical interpretation. As regularly frequented institutions, museums are at the heart of the shaping and reshaping of collective memory (Lee, 2018).

Balanced Histories

Since the 1990s, many peace museums have presented war histories of Japan as an assailant (Yamane, 2017). The degree to which detail is given about Japan's aggressive past, however, varies widely. Privately-run museums are much more courageous in their displays of wartime history. The Kyoto Museum for World Peace, for example, widened the purpose of peace museums by detailing Japan's aggressive militarism (Yamane, 2017). Its exhibits of the so-called "Fifteen Years War" (1931-1945), display

macabre evidence of the military's misconduct in Asian and Pacific countries (Ritsumeikan University, 2015). In the process, public discussion about denial, guilt, and war responsibility has ensued and enabled Japanese citizens who visit these museums to attain more accurate knowledge of their nation's wartime history (den Dungen & Yamane, 2015). The museums' factual and impartial portrayal of the Fifteen Years War has somewhat contributed to reconciliation, peace, and trust-building among countries in the wider region who were subjected to Japanese war crimes (den Dungen, 2006). These open and accurate narratives of the war, however, have received much resistance and criticism from right-wing groups and conservative factions, such as Nippon Kaigi. They dispel and dispute the historical accuracy of the museums' exhibits which has led to the revising of content.

Museums Under Attack

Since the early 2000s, nationalist groups in Japan have mounted pressure on numerous privately-run museums to either align their histories with revisionist narratives or face closure (den Dungen & Yamane, 2015). Rather than protecting the museums' right to freedom of expression, the government has openly supported groups and institutions which silence them (Birdwhistell, 2017). As a result, collective forgetting has increased (Birdwhistell, 2017). This forgetting has had a significant effect on the freedom of peace museums across Japan to display objective and balanced histories of the war (Yamane, 2010).

In 2015, former Osaka Mayor Toru Hashimoto founded the nationalist party, *Ishin no Kai* (Japan Restoration Party), in a bid to reclaim Japan's "national values" and "patriotic spirit" (Gibson, 2016). Hashimoto had received notoriety in 2013 for his statement that the forced sexual enslavement of tens of thousands of Korean and Chinese women, so-called "comfort women", by the Imperial Japanese army was "necessary" (Asahi Shimbun, 2013). During his mayoral term (2011-2015) Hashimoto put pressure on Osaka's International Peace Centre to revise their displays of Japan's wartime past (Sankei News, 2015). The museum's exhibition dedicated to the Fifteen

Year War (1931-1945) gave detailed explanations of the atrocities committed by the Japanese military on subjugated peoples in Asia, including the enslavement of the “comfort women” (Seaton, 2015). Hashimoto gave an ultimatum to the museum threatening closure if the exhibitions were not revised. The museum succumbed to pressure from Ishin no Kai and decided to revise its exhibition halls (Seaton, 2015). After a year of renovations, the museum reopened and no longer displays any reference to Japan’s history of aggression or victimisation (Gibson, 2016).

Japan’s so-called “History Problem” is in part due to the numerous versions of history displayed within its museums (Yamane, 2017). The Japanese government views the country’s victimhood from the atomic bombings to be mutually exclusive to the collective memory of Japan’s aggression (Birdwhistell, 2017). Professor Kazuyo Yamane (2017) of Kochi University commented that students who enrol in peace studies at Japanese universities are often shocked to learn of the aggressive history of Japan during the Asia-Pacific War. This is largely a result of school textbooks lacking adequate historical detail. Rather than teaching factual history about Japan’s aggression, emphasis is put on the teaching of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki which thus spreads victim consciousness among school children (Yamane, 2017). This same narrative is propagated by the Peace Memorial Museum in Hiroshima.

4.4 The Hiroshima Peace Museum

In 1955, when the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum was opened, its stated purpose was: “[to] convey to the peoples of all countries the reality of the damage inflicted by the atomic bomb, and contribute to the achievement of nuclear abolition and lasting world peace, which is the spirit of Hiroshima.” (Hataguchi, 1998, p. 46). The Museum was created as a place to remind people of the past and to preserve the future for lasting peace. The A-bomb Materials Preservation Association gathered artefacts from residents to be displayed in the museum. It stayed in its original state until 1975 when the first large-scale renovations were conducted with exhibits also being redesigned (Naono, 2005).

Content shaping Victimhood

The shaping of the 'Spirit of Hiroshima' is evident in the revisions to the exhibitions of the Peace Museum. It produces a 'victim consciousness' which is enabled, in part, due to the lack of evidence of Japanese war crimes. This history is often introduced in the passive voice and, in doing so, the Japanese leadership and military are absolved of, "any responsibility in instigating, accelerating and maintaining wartime belligerence and colonization" (Giamo, 2003, p. 708). The result is a collective forgetting of Japanese bellicosity during the Second World War.

In 1994, the second large-scale renovations took place and the former memorial hall was integrated into the main museum. (Naono, 2005). A 360-degree view of the destruction of Hiroshima City after the dropping of the bomb was installed in the main exhibition hall. This creates for the visitor, a sense of 'being there' in 1945 in the aftermath of the bombing (Young, 1998). The main building also purports to show what happened in Hiroshima through artefacts, photographs, and personal belongings of the victims (Naono, 2005). This elicits a collective memory centred around 'victim consciousness' by demonstrating aspects of the bombings which were damaging to civilian life and presenting Japan as the first 'victim' of the nuclear age (Murakami, 1998). It promotes peace by graphically showing the visitor the morbid aftereffects of the bombings and the harm nuclear weapons can cause if used in warfare (Hataguchi, 1998). In this narrative, the Japanese are victims of war, rather than responsible participatory assailants in it (Murakami, 1998)

The East Building contains displays relating to the history of Hiroshima before the bomb was dropped, the development of the atomic bomb and the nuclear age, the dropping of the bomb itself, and the city's peace promotion activities (Naono, 2005). At the time of writing, this building is currently being renovated and is scheduled to reopen in the spring of 2019 (Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, 2018). After renovating the East Building (the former Peace Memorial Hall), the site reopened in

April 2017 and the building now displays video testimonies from hibakusha (Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, 2018).

***Hibakusha*⁵**

Hibakusha have been instrumental to the shaping of collective memory of Hiroshima. The museum contains facilities for students to come and hear first-hand experiences from the hibakusha volunteers. They share their stories and show documentary films of footage taken after the bombing. Through the hibakusha, students and visitors can learn of the effects of atomic warfare by their teaching of the indiscriminate nature of nuclear weapons (Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, 2018). One of the museum's displays shows the three phases of a nuclear explosion; all of which were experienced by the hibakusha. These are: the heat rays, blast and shockwave, and the subsequent effects of radiation on those exposed; an aspect unique to nuclear weapons.

The exhibits also document the cases of leukaemia and cancers experienced by hibakusha, which saw a marked increase in the months, years, and decades following the bombing (Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, 2018). In order to portray this aspect of nuclear weapons, the museum displays things such as lost hair, photographs of keloid scars, and other radiated objects. Victims and hibakusha shown in these displays are used as somatic markers to elicit sympathy and sorrow. These are often accompanied by stories in order to make it comprehensible and relatable to the visitor (Murakami, 1998).

Many hibakusha have been active in passing on negative war experiences to younger people at the museum. In doing so, they perform a vital social function. The passing on of their memories teaches successive generations the importance of nonviolence. This collective shared pain of the war allows recognition of the significance of peace (Chen, 2012). These negative memories, however, focus mainly on suffering and thus elicit a sense of victimhood (Murakami, 1998). The collective forgetting that results enables

⁵ Atomic bomb survivor/victim

the visitors to feel a sense of affinity and solidarity with the hibakusha. For Japanese visitors in particular, this further affirms the national victimhood narrative.

Effect

Biannually the museum holds exhibitions. The museum states that the exhibitions are to: “help people understand more deeply certain aspects of the atomic bomb damage, the tragedy of war, and the sanctity of peace.” (Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, 2018). The city and its museum have produced a collective memory not only within Japan but also overseas of the horrors of nuclear warfare. It has used this memory to appeal to support for the abolition of nuclear weapons around the world. The museum also states that: “Seeing this will convince you, we hope, of the foolishness of continuing to develop nuclear weapons” (Hataguchi, 1998). This clearly shows the museum’s objective to shape collective memory of the bomb among visitors.

Visitor numbers to the museum have remained steady over the years, an ever-increasing proportion of which from overseas. In 2015, the museum saw a record high number of 340,000 foreign visitors (Lee, 2018). In 2017, the museum recorded a total number of 1.6 million visitors passing through its doors (Nippon News, 2017). After viewing the exhibits, patrons are encouraged to write their thoughts in the visitor’s book.

4.5 Visitor Comments:

In 2005, the museum published a book entitled: “What Hiroshima Asks of Us: From the ‘Dialogue Notebooks’ of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum” (Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, 2018). The curator of the museum, Hironobu Ochiba stated that the comments were selected to ensure a variety of backgrounds and perspectives (Chen, 2012). From the 920 comment books which the museum had amassed, 325 comments were chosen for the book (Chen, 2012). The comments are given by visitors

at the end of their visit to the museum. Information on the writers' background, however, is often not given. Thus, while analysing the visitor comments is not a fair sample of the opinions of all of the visitors, it does offer a valuable insight into the collective memory which is elicited by the museum.

Data Set

In Chen's (2012) analysis of the book, the amount of comments which expressed disapproval of nuclear weapons only numbered 8%, as opposed to 29% (the highest) expressing hope for peace. This reflects the aspect of peace promotion in Hiroshima's collective memory. The majority of visitors expressed the importance of preserving the memory of the atomic bombing so that future generations can avoid the fate of a nuclear war and maintain peace (den Dungen, 2006). This can be seen in the following comments:

I pray for peace. We don't know what war is like. I hope all children in the future will not know a war. - High school student.

I hope that this Memorial Museum will serve as a warning to future generations not to repeat the mistakes of the past. World peace through education seems to be an effective way to create a new generation that would make peace permanent. - USA.

The victim consciousness is evident in the sorrow, shock, and anger elicited by the exhibitions for the innocent killing of civilians (Chen, 2012). It is presented by explicit displays of civilian injuries and are used as somatic markers to elicit emotional responses (Damasio et al., 1996). This aspect of victimhood is an integral aspect to Hiroshima's collective memory. It can be seen in the following comments:

I cried in the museum. I shed tears not out of sympathy and sorrow but out of wrath. Don't look away from human dishonour that brings death to innocent people. – High school student.

We must avoid another such war as that at any cost. I pray for the repose of the victims. – Anonymous.

While watching the materials in this museum, I was trembling all along. Let us pray for the repose of the victims. – Anonymous.

These comments demonstrate the production of a sense of 'dead among the living' in the visitors (Sakamoto, 2015). The physical reactions to the exhibitions demonstrate the power of the somatic markers employed in the museum. This produces sympathy with the victims of the bombing and reflects the objectives of the museum to preserve the memory of the casualties. Only two comments from the book criticise the actions of Japan's military and expose the collective forgetting which the museum produces. Both comments are from non-Japanese visitors and indicate the employment of victimhood in the museum:

This museum seems to impress more the desires for pity for the Japanese. [...] How about some [pity] for the surrendered victims of the dishonourable sneak attack on Pearl Harbor? – USA.

The scene here is horrible. You can imagine what an atomic bomb can do. But considering what they did to people of South East Asian countries, I think, this scene is just the same there. Do you Japanese realize this? Have you seen what soldiers did to the people of our countries? No? – Malaysia.

The comments thus reflect the different aspects to Hiroshima's collective memory produced by the museum. They elicit in the visitor the hope for peace, sympathy and victimhood, and a collective forgetting of the actions of Japan during the war.

Effect

As the comments were selected by the curators and board of editors at their own discretion, the book also provides insight into the collective memory which the museum has aimed to manufacture. That the 'hope for peace' was the highest theme observed through the comments in the book represents fulfilment of museum's objective. Observation of the effect that the museum has on visitors provides a valuable insight into the collective memory it elicits. Behind this effect is an inextricable connection to a sense of national victimhood as Lee (2018, p. 18) purports: "Hiroshima stands firmly as the premier icon of Japanese victimization. [...] The overall message is presented in terms of the national trauma beyond the city's struggle over the nuclear blast.". The Peace Museum has been a crucial educational vehicle for the furthering of this narrative. This is inextricably tied to the notion of pacifism in post-war Japanese culture.

Since 2013, the Abe administration has proposed revising Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution which renounces Japan's ability to wage war, and also called for a referendum on the issue in 2020. The justification for this is that it will improve Japan's "overall security" in light of a more assertive China and hostile North Korea (Osaki & Kikuchi, 2017). If successful, this will, however, put Japan's collective memory of the war, and its strong connection to pacifism, into question. This will likely result in a dramatic change to Japan's external and internal identity (Bochat, 2008). Results of a 2018 survey, however, show that over 60 per cent of respondents did not want amendment of Article 9, with approximately 30 per cent in favour (Cucek, 2018). While security and war are two different things, the results of this survey demonstrate the contested nature of war and peace among the Japanese population. It also presents challenges to the collective memory of Hiroshima and vindication of its peace promotion.

4.6 Conclusion

The Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park has allowed Japanese culture and identity to be closely linked to the notion of nonviolence through the employment of the 'Spirit of Hiroshima', symbols, collective forgetting, and the peace museum. Hiroshima's narrative is vital to a Japanese sense of national belonging and identity. The collective memory centred around the atomic bombings has cultivated a strong bearing among the Japanese people for peace. This is reflected in Article 9 of the Japanese constitution which states that Japan will forever renounce war and the means to wage it (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, 1947).

The collective memory of Hiroshima is shown to have three main aspects: peace promotion, victimhood, and collective forgetting of Japan's aggression and associated crimes. The peace aspect is imbued by the Peace Memorial Museum and Park, the victimhood is represented through the hibakusha and museum exhibitions, and the collective forgetting is a result of the central focus of the former two aspects in collective memory. This contributes to a strong sense of pacifism among Japanese people and is a defining characteristic of their national identity.

Chapter 5: Obama's Visit

"Those who died, they are like us." – Barack Obama

5.1 The Visit

On May 27, 2016, Barack Obama became the first sitting American President to visit Hiroshima in an official capacity (Sneider, 2016). He broke a history of presidents who have rejected visiting the city. This chapter analyses the shaping of collective memory through public debate before, during, and after Obama's visit. The data for this analysis is sourced from surveys conducted by Japanese media organisations around the time of the event.

Background

From 2014 to 2016, the "Letters to Obama" campaign was conducted by the Hiroshima Television Corporation (2016) with participation from the prefectural government, City of Hiroshima, hibakusha, women's groups, and children. Over the two years of the campaign 1,400 letters were compiled (Hiroshima Television Corporation, 2016). The purpose of the campaign was to explicitly express to Obama that the people of Hiroshima do not desire an apology for the bombing, but only urge the President to visit the city and see the truth.

The majority of the letters were themed around peace as can be seen in the following four examples provided on the Hiroshima Television Corporation (2016) campaign website:

Hiroshima citizens are heartfully waiting for your visit. We do not seek an apology; what Hiroshima wants is that you pray for the total abolition of nuclear weapons and the preservation of peace.

We, the people of Hiroshima, do not want to debate whether the dropping of the bomb was right or not. We merely want the people of the world to see what happened here.

For the sake of world peace, come to Hiroshima.

Please write a new page of history in Hiroshima.

These letters imbue the hope that Obama's visiting Hiroshima will further the promotion of peace which the collective memory of Hiroshima is centred around. Their purpose is for Obama to come to Hiroshima and be shaped by the collective memory that it represents. The letters were personally delivered to the White House by the head of Hiroshima Television, Hideaki Miyama (Hiroshima Television Corporation, 2016). Obama subsequently announced his plans to visit Hiroshima in 2016 (Gardiner Harris et al., 2016).

Pre-visit

A survey of Hiroshima citizens prior to the visit showed overwhelming support for it with 92% of people in favour (Chūgoku Shimbun, 2016a). In the lead-up to the visit the Japanese media focussed much attention on the reaction to the announcement by the hibakusha, as well as speculation about the possibility of Obama apologising for the dropping of the bomb. The hibakusha are at the centre of the victim narrative around Hiroshima and are thus a living representation of the collective memory presented at the museum (Sneider, 2016). They have also been instrumental in movements for peace and the abolition of nuclear weapons so their opinion of the visit was given attention by the general population (Naono, 2005).

Kyodo News (2016) conducted a survey of 115 hibakusha from across Japan. The results showed that a large majority of the respondents were supportive of the visit by Obama. In answer to the question, “Do you want an apology from the President?” a majority 78 per cent of hibakusha answered “no”. A follow up question asked, “What do you hope the President will do when he is in Hiroshima?”. A majority 76 per cent of hibakusha stated that they hoped Obama would visit the Peace Memorial Museum.

Another survey of 200 Hibakusha was conducted by NHK (2016) around the same time. The results to this multiple answer questionnaire showed that a majority 88 per cent of respondents wanted Obama to visit the museum, and 81 per cent wanted him to lay a wreath for the victims of the bombing. The hopes of these hibakusha were fulfilled when Obama laid a wreath at the Flame of Peace in the Peace Memorial Park after his speech (Sneider, 2016). It is apparent through these actions, and also comments in Obama’s speech, that consideration was taken to propitiate the collective memory of the hibakusha.

The Visit

The content of Obama’s speech demonstrates the influence of the collective memory of Hiroshima. While he was cautious not to denounce the decision by President Harry Truman to drop the atomic bomb in 1945, his references to the hibakusha and the victims in the following statement is clearly evident of Hiroshima’s collective memory: (Sneider, 2016)

Someday, the voices of the hibakusha will no longer be with us to bear witness. But the memory of the morning of August 6, 1945, must never fade. That memory allows us to fight complacency. It fuels our moral imagination. It allows us to change. (Office of the Press Secretary, 2016)

Here, Obama affirms the importance of preserving the collective memory of the hibakusha so as to prevent the history of Hiroshima from being repeated. The visit itself demonstrates a shift in post-war collective memory surrounding Hiroshima.

In the first few years after the bombing, the Japanese government itself placed blame solely on the wartime leadership (Sneider, 2016). Since the 1990s, however, a distancing from Japan's war responsibility in lieu of defining the war as one of self-defence has grown (Yamane, 2017). This has coincided with a rise in the victimhood narrative presented at the Peace Memorial Museum in addition to peace promotion activities (Yamane, 2017). Nevertheless, while the conservative view of Japan fighting a war of self-defence still exists among certain nationalist groups and politicians, the dominant collective memory of victimhood remains to bolster the dominant pacifist narrative (Sneider, 2016). In the following remarks, Obama states that the responsibility for the war was not solely one country's fault, but that the war was instigated due to man's inhumanity to man:

Empires have risen and fallen. Peoples have been subjugated and liberated. And at each juncture, innocents have suffered, a countless toll, their names forgotten by time. (Office of the Press Secretary, 2016)

This therefore creates war as the enemy, rather than nations or people, and reflects the narrative presented at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. The people ('innocents') thus become victims of war. At the centre of this narrative is the hibakusha (Sneider, 2016). It teaches that rather than taking responsibility for the war, the actions of the wartime Japanese leadership, and the atrocities committed by the Imperial Army, the enemy is the war itself and the resulting destruction and suffering (Yamane, 2017). This is evident in Obama's following statement:

We see these stories in the Hibakusha. The woman who forgave a pilot who flew the plane that dropped the atomic bomb because she recognised that what she really hated was war itself (Office of the Press Secretary, 2016)

While there is no reason to claim that these statements are unjustified, in their effect they produce collective forgetting. By apportioning the blame on war, it abrogates any national responsibility and dispels any logic that consequential suffering of war is due to actions taken by the leadership of a nation. It bypasses legal consequences and goes outside that of individual or group control and responsibility (Halbwachs & Coser, 1992). Obama's remarks therefore reflect the victimization of Japan, while simultaneously repudiating his own country's liability for the suffering induced by the atomic bombings. He also does not apologise for, or denounce, the decision to drop the bomb. This demonstrates his high level of political adept as it maintains the validity of the decision among the American population and in the same instance meets the expectations of the majority of the hibakusha and citizens who were not seeking an apology.

In the following three statements, Obama elicits affinity from contemporary people with the victims who died in the bombing (Office of the Press Secretary, 2016). He alludes to Anderson and O'Gorman's (2016) 'imagined community' that the museum has created:

Their souls speak to us. They ask us to look inward, to take stock of who we are and what we might become.

That is why we come to Hiroshima. So that we might think of people we love. The first smile from our children in the morning. The gentle touch from a spouse over the kitchen table. The comforting embrace of a parent. We can think of those things and know that those same precious moments took place here, 71 years ago.

Hiroshima teaches us the truth. [...] That is why we come to this place. We stand here in the middle of this city and for ourselves to imagine the moment the bomb fell. [...] We listen to a silent cry. We remember

all the innocents killed. Mere words cannot give voice to such suffering.

This notion of the dead existing among the living is a common theme seen in both the Peace Memorial Museum and the Yūshūkan. These references to the deceased are used as verbal somatic markers. This bears similarity to the remarks about the *eirei* given by Abe's statement after visiting Yasukuni. Their intent is to elicit empathy and create a sense of 'being there', while immortalising the memory of the victims among contemporary people (Young, 1998). It elicits familial memories which is highly effective in producing empathy (Halbwachs & Coser, 1992). Obama's use of Hiroshima's collective memory served well to please the wishes of the *hibakusha*. His selectiveness in utilising the victim aspects and dead in his remarks shows that the collective memory of Japan could be utilised to aid his political standing. He balanced this viewpoint with references to: "thousands of Koreans, [and] a dozen Americans held prisoner." who also perished in the bombing (Office of the Press Secretary, 2016). It demonstrated the employment of Hiroshima's collective memory to avoid political ramifications from groups which would have felt disregarded.

After his speech, Obama met with three *Hibakusha* selected to attend the ceremony by the Japanese government (Kadota, 2016). The selective nature and small number of individuals chosen demonstrates a shaping of the collective memory surrounding *hibakusha* by the government. Obama shook hands with all three *hibakusha* who officially attended and was photographed embracing one who was visibly upset (Kadota, 2016). Photos and footage of this moment were broadcast on nearly all of Japan's media platforms as well as internationally (Miyatake, 2016). The hug physically shows Obama's affirmation of the victim narrative and collective memory surrounding the *hibakusha* and victims of war.

Obama subsequently viewed the statue to Sadako Sasaki with Prime Minister Abe before visiting the Peace Memorial Museum (Kadota, 2016). After viewing the museum's exhibitions, Obama wrote the following in the visitors' book:

We have known the agony of war. Let us now find the courage, together, to spread peace, and pursue a world without nuclear weapons. (Kyodo News, 2016).

The visit to the park and museum had a significant impact on the people of Hiroshima and an overall reaction being mostly positive among Japanese people, yet contestation among some groups was evident.

Post-visit

After Obama's visit, Asahi Shimbun (2016) surveyed over 5,000 hibakusha across Japan⁶ about their thoughts on the event. The results showed a 72 per cent approval rating for the visit. The Chūgoku Shimbun (2016b), the largest newspaper in the greater Hiroshima region, also conducted a survey of local people asking a question with multiple-choice answers on the significance of Obama's visit to Hiroshima. The results showed that 89.6 per cent of respondents viewed the visit positively with 44.8 per cent thinking it was very significant, and 44.8 per cent thinking it was reasonably significant.

The same newspaper conducted another multiple-choice survey asking respondents to select reasons as to why they thought Obama's visit was constructive. The results showed that 75 per cent of respondents cited Obama's laying of the wreath to the souls of the victims, followed by 44 per cent citing his remarks about the hibakusha, and 40 per cent citing his visit to the Peace Memorial Museum (Chūgoku Shimbun, 2016b). This demonstrates the importance of the dead among the living in Hiroshima's collective memory and the significance to the citizens of its recognition. The hibakusha and the peace museum are also integral aspects to this collective memory. Obama's repeated referencing of the victims in his speech and subsequent meeting

⁶ Total number of hibakusha as of March 2016 was 174,080. Nihon Hidankyo 2018, *About Hidankyo*, viewed December 10, 2018, <<http://www.ne.jp/asahi/hidankyo/nihon/english/about/about1-01.html>>.

with hibakusha, as well as his visit to the peace museum garnered generally positive responses. This affirmed the collective memory of many Hiroshima citizens, and the wider Japanese population.

Another survey of citizens of the Greater Hiroshima Area asked, “Should an apology be given to Hibakusha the next time an American President visits Hiroshima?”. The results showed that a majority of people did not seek an apology with 69.5 per cent answering “no” or “indifferent” and the remaining 30.5 per cent answering “yes” (Chūgoku Shimbun, 2016b).

A subsequent survey of the five largest hibakusha associations across Japan, however, showed that the collective memory of the bomb remains contested among the survivors. The groups were asked to provide justified answers to the question, “Should an apology be given the next time an American President visits Hiroshima?”. The Nagasaki Hibakusha Association answered “yes” stating: “The atomic bomb was a weapon which indiscriminately killed many. The resulting effects of radiation, which are a unique characteristic of nuclear weapons, cannot be forgiven.” (Chūgoku Shimbun, 2016b). The Yasaorudzuru Hibakusha Association also answered “yes” and stated: “We cannot view positively any reason for the criminality of inflicting incomparable destruction on the world and its people.” The two groups which answered “no” gave reasons which reflected the majority of the hibakushas’ responses in the aforementioned surveys. The Aomori Prefectural Hibakusha Association answered “indifferent” stating: “It is no longer necessary to debate about an apology. Too much time has passed. Rather than an apology, we want to receive more leadership in the movement for the total abolition of nuclear weapons.” (Chūgoku Shimbun, 2016b)

The results of this particular survey demonstrate that a number of different collective memories of the bomb exist among the hibakusha and that the memory of the bomb remains contested. Hibakusha groups were very active from the 1950s to the 1980s in holding the Japanese government to account for the suffering and aftereffects of the bombing. The Nihon Hidankyo (Japan Confederation of A- and H-Bomb Sufferers

Organizations), for example, states that: “Hidankyo has constantly demanded that the Japanese government should admit Japan’s state responsibility of launching the war, which eventually led to the atomic bombing.”(Nihon Hidankyo, 2018). Hidankyo’s efforts have led to the enactment of a number of laws for the medical treatment, support and assistance of hibakusha. Despite this, Hidankyo maintains that: “[the government] neither provides state compensation nor admits the war responsibility of the state.” (Nihon Hidankyo, 2018). This demonstrates a much more balanced collective memory which is less inclined to induce forgetting of Japan’s actions proceeding the bombing, or war responsibility, while still maintaining the memory of the suffering and destruction that the bomb caused. Since the 1990s, however, discussion of state accountability for the bombing has lessened among the majority of hibakusha groups in lieu of peace promotion (Yamane, 2017).

Today, the majority of hibakusha do not seek the Japanese government’s contrition nor an apology from the American President. The dominant collective memory which they possess promotes peace through memorializing the effects and suffering of the victims. This narrative nevertheless elicits collective forgetting in the process. The mostly positive reaction to Obama’s visit demonstrated the prevalence of this narrative but also exposed the contestation of the memory of the bomb between different hibakusha groups.

Outcome

In December 2016, Mainichi Shimbun (2016) published an article and picture of the thank you letter which the Peace Memorial Museum received from President Obama, shown in *figure 10*. In the letter, Obama reaffirms the suffering and example of the hibakusha and states that: “So long as more people take time to understand the past [...] a more peaceful future lies ahead.”

This suggests that understanding the narrative of ‘the past’ presented at the museum will bring about peace. In doing so, Obama is inadvertently endorsing the collective

forgetting produced by the museum's exhibits and displays. In response, Museum Director Kenji Shiga stated: "One can sense from this written text that the President saw the harsh reality of the damage cause by the atomic bomb and is serious about looking into the eye of history. I am grateful."(Mainichi Shimbun, 2016)

Four months later, the museum unveiled a display dedicated to Obama's visit, shown in *figure 11*. It exhibited four origami cranes which were folded by Obama himself (City of Hiroshima, 2017). These cranes demonstrate Obama's commitment to the promotion of peace; an integral aspect of Hiroshima's collective memory. By the museum creating a dedicated display to the visit, a shaping of the collective memory of Hiroshima can be observed. This is salient as this narrative is affirmed and validated by someone as significant as the American President. Nevertheless, it furthers collective forgetting about Japan's aggression and war responsibility within the museum and suggests that the current displays are sufficient in presenting a contextualised history of bombing of Hiroshima.

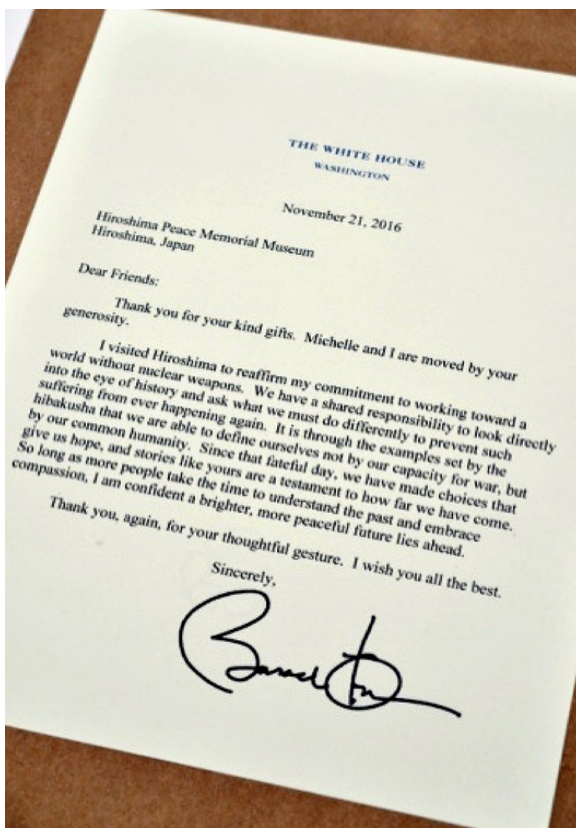


Figure 10 - Thank you letter from Barack Obama. Image downloaded from www.japantimes.co.jp in December 2018



Figure 11 - Obama's Hiroshima Visit Display. Image downloaded from www.japantimes.co.jp in December 2018

5.2 Conclusion

The public debate around Obama's visit to Hiroshima demonstrated the localisation of Hiroshima's collective memory. The media attention focused mostly on the opinions of local people and hibakusha. It showed that the selection of questions in the surveys centred mainly around an apology or the thoughts of the hibakusha. In this way, the public debate shaped the collective memory to espouse the victim narrative. Due to the largely positive responses, the visit gained significance and affirmed Hiroshima's place in the national consciousness. Nevertheless, this reaction prompted forgetting of Japan's wartime aggression and disapproval from certain hibakusha groups. While this consternation was evident in the data, the dominance of the collective memory of victimhood is indisputable. Obama's visit thus demonstrated the power and influence of this narrative in shaping the national psyche.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The post-war collective memory of Japan remains contested. In the seven decades since Japan's defeat, the way in which the country remembers its wartime history has produced differing and largely conflicting narratives. This study investigated the collective war memories represented at two sites of memorial in Japan; Yasukuni Shrine and the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park. The former presenting a collective memory which glorifies the war dead and praises their sacrifices to the nation, and the latter, a memorial to the victims of the atomic bombings and symbol for the promotion of peace and total abolition of nuclear weapons. In this sense, the two sites represent narratives of sacrifice to Japan which has 'enabled its prosperity and peace today'. As comprehensive study of this nature is shown to be lacking, analysis of these sites has offered insight into the place they hold in society Japan's collective memory, and the effect they have on a sense of nationhood and Japanese identity.

The results have demonstrated that selective remembering induces forgetting. The utilising of death to evoke sentiment, emphasis on the victims of the war and their souls, apportioning blame on the war itself, and the eliciting of a sense of national pride have all produced significant collective forgetting of the aggression, atrocities, and victimisation of East Asian and Pacific peoples. The historical revisionism which has taken place means that successive generations will lack adequate knowledge of Japan's expansionist past. The results affirmed that young people are more susceptible to adopting this revised version of history. In their forgetting, Yasukuni and Hiroshima work in tandem to further the narratives of war dead glorification, and victimhood which inadvertently serves nationalist causes. Significantly, the two sites have elicited national pride and a strong sense of 'Japaneseness' among visitors.

The visits of Abe and Obama show that collective memory is not just a societal issue, but one which is intertwined with politics as well. Yasukuni's narrative received state validation, and Hiroshima's received international recognition. Abe's visit was evaluated to varying degrees, while Obama's largely gained positive reactions. Results demonstrated, however, that the public debate around the visits exposed contestation of the collective memory associated with each site. The degree to which varying collective memories of the war are entrenched within different individuals and groups in Japanese society, will likely continue to influence the level of political association with the two sites. Contestation of collective memory will also persist in the process.

It is natural that after experiencing the trauma of war, a nation wants to memorialise the death of millions of its people, and Japan is no exception. Nevertheless, in remembering certain things, we forget others. The use of this memory to selectively forget negative aspects of a country's actions in wartime results in divisive versions of history and societal disaffection. It is important, however, to view history for what it is and to learn of the bad aspects of one's country's past. In doing so, a balance and perspective is gained which can safeguard future generations from repeating forgotten histories and afford appropriate remembrance to those who have gone before.

根を立て葉を枯らす

Stand on the roots, and the leaves will die.

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